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COMMENTARY

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The Libraries in a Time of Tension — JAMES RORTY
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Haiman Philip Spitz—An Autobiography
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From the American Scene
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The Study of Man
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BOOKS IN REVIEW

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COMMENTARY

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IN FORTHCOMING ISSUES OF

COMMENTARY

As the Negotiations Begin *Raymond Aron*

The French political thinker, author of *The Century of Total War,* gives his estimate of the strengths and weaknesses of the West as it enters into a period of negotiations, and suggests how Soviet intentions may be tested.

The Saturday Night Social Club *Theodore Frankel*

A portrait of a new institution in New York, where unattached young men and women seeking friendship and matrimony meet and dance and listen to lectures.

Germany and the Austrian Treaty *Terence Prittie*

With the neutralization of Austria, it has been asked on every side whether West Germany will not now desert its alliance with the West in return for another "Austrian solution." The Manchester *Guardian's* Germany correspondent shows which way the wind is blowing.

Israel's Foreign Policy *W. Z. Laqueur*

Has Israel's position in foreign affairs deteriorated? So many Israelis think, and the country is now engaged in a "great debate" considering what action it should take to remedy its supposed isolation. But, asks a veteran correspondent, is this in fact the case?

Synagogue Art Today *William Schack*

With the building on a vast scale throughout the country, and especially in the suburbs, of new synagogues, temples, and centers, a small renaissance in synagogue art has taken place. William Schack describes its character and discusses its implications.

The Jewish Revival: A Sociological Report *Nathan Glazer*

American Jewish community and institutional life has shown a remarkable resurgence of specifically Jewish character in recent years. Nathan Glazer, a frequent contributor, analyzes some of the causes and nature of this development.

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COMMENTARY

DOES THE PEOPLE'S RULE DOOM DEMOCRACY?

Walter Lippmann's Diagnosis of Western Decline

OSCAR HANDLIN

ON THE cover of the February, 1955, *Atlantic,* the artist has skillfully caught the mood of Walter Lippmann's new book. Well back in the room, the figure of the author emerges from the indistinct clutter of papers that flow across the desk, the chest, the floor. The whiteness of his shirt and hair set off the shadows of his face, rigid in somber contemplation. His eyes, lidded over in thought, gaze down, absorbed in some portentous vision.

The mood of imminent doom is borne out in the author's introduction to the book. He has been brooding, he tells us, about "an historic catastrophe," about the decline of Western society. The premonition of that decline came to him in 1938 as he saw the approach of another world war with the democracies unprepared and unarmed. After the war, his foreboding "was in a terrible measure realized"; there was "no mistaking the decline of the West." This volume, then, *Essays in the Public Philosophy,* is an inquiry into the reasons for the "grave errors in war and peace" responsible for that decay.

Lippmann now believes that the fatal disorder set in in 1917 when there occurred "an unrecognized revolution within the democratic states." Until then, there had been a clear delimitation of functions in the Western polities; the executive, "the active power in the state," had exercised the power to govern, while the people through their elected representatives had given their consent to be governed. Diplomacy, like the other crucial affairs of state, had been managed by statesmen undisturbed by the confusing clamor of the populace. "Life was secure, liberty was assured, and the way was open to the pursuit of private happiness." Such was the idyllic state of the pre-war world.

Under the terrible pressures of the world

IF POPULAR democracy has sometimes been impatient with intelligence, intelligence has often thrown up its hands in exasperation with popular democracy. Why Walter Lippmann, one of America's foremost political commentators and a liberal democrat, should come to despair of the efficacy of democratic government is the question examined here by OSCAR HANDLIN, in an essay occasioned by the recent publication of Mr. Lippmann's book *Essays in the Public Philosophy* (Atlantic-Little Brown, 189 pp., $3.50). Professor Handlin is, of course, well known to COMMENTARY'S readers. Born in 1915, he received his education at Brooklyn College and Harvard University, where he is now professor of history. His *The Uprooted,* a study of immigration in American history, won a Pulitzer Prize in 1952. Among the other books of which he is author are *Adventure in Freedom* and the recently published *Chance or Destiny: Turning Points in American History.* "The American Jewish Pattern, After 300 Years" was his latest contribution to these pages, in October 1954.

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war, however, the statesmen of the democracies lost courage and, fearful of demanding the necessary sacrifices of their people, shifted to the masses the burden of responsibility for decision. Ever since, the executive in the democracies has not really governed but has allowed itself to be swayed by an inchoate public opinion. Hence there could be no lasting peace after 1918, there could be no adequate preparation for the inevitable war in the 1930's, and there could be no orderly settlement of the issues raised by the defeat of fascism after 1945. The masses, lusting after soft solutions, obstructed the measures necessary to their own salvation; and the helpless democracies drifted, and still drift, to their doom.

Only one frail hope exists of halting the trend, Lippmann warns. The decline may yet be reversed if a revival of the "Public Philosophy" once more makes clear the appropriate positions of governed and governors. But given the circumstances of the times, Lippmann cannot be confident that such a revival will come about. Hence the underlying pessimism of his book.

WALTER LIPPMANN'S tortured argument deserves cool and extended analysis. Its political theory is shallow, and its comprehension of the events of our times is vague and uncertain. But it expresses in a significant, if extreme, form the fears and doubts stirred up among some American intellectuals by the liberalism of their society.

To understand the import of this book, it is necessary first to pull away its flimsy factual props and expose its profound misunderstanding of recent history. Lippmann offers in evidence of the culpability of the masses three crises in which excessive regard for public opinion seems, to him, to have driven the democratic statesmen into wrong decisions: the peace of 1918; the preparations to resist fascism in the 1930's; and the strategy of unconditional surrender in the Second World War. In each case he is completely in error.

The consequences of the failure of the Treaty of Versailles were without doubt disastrous, although it may be there were other causes, too, for the subsequent troubles of Europe. But the reason why the treaty took the form it did is by no means that set forth by Lippmann here. Lloyd George, Clemenceau, Wilson, and Orlando, he asserts, dictated a punitive peace rather than one of reconciliation because the people "would not countenance a workable peace" and insisted upon vengeance. Having "vetoed reconciliation," they "made the settlement unworkable."

In sober fact, the people's wishes had little to do with the actual terms of the treaty. The outlines of those terms had already been drawn with some precision in the series of secret agreements the Allies signed with each other before 1917. Certainly the passions of war could not casually be turned off at the armistice; but they scarcely affected the calculations of the statesmen who had already made up their minds as to the shape of the map of the new Europe. By a curious lapse of memory, Lippmann, who was present at Paris at the time, has altogether forgotten about those agreements.

A similar gap in memory is evident in Lippmann's account of the reasons for the democracies' tardiness in resisting Hitler. The people had become "too pacifist," he maintains, and refused to prepare for war, relying instead on "unarmed appeasement" and "unarmed isolation."

Yet the order of events in the decade before 1939 points to quite another conclusion. Through the 1930's, the statesmen in power —Chamberlain, Laval, Sir John Simon, and even F.D.R.—were far slower to see the threat of fascism in Japan and Ethiopia and Spain and Germany than was public opinion. And the description of the democracies as "unarmed" is fantastic. The French army, the British and American navies, were far from neglected and far from pacifist in their purposes. Through those very stringent years, the American Congress never once failed to give the armed forces the appropriations requested of it; and the record of the legislatures of the other democracies was probably as consistent.

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If anything, the appearance of massive strength in fortifications and battleships made the Western statesmen overconfident. It is difficult to remember, in the light of the outcome, that as 1940 opened, the French and the British were quite willing to take on Russia as well as Germany. The Allies had no doubt that the Nazis would soon be beaten; after all, when the invasion of Norway began Chamberlain exulted in the certainty that Hitler had missed the bus. The democracies were unprepared, not because they were unarmed or because their people had been hesitant to resist the evils of fascism, but rather because the statesmen and their military advisers showed a fatal disposition to select the inappropriate weapons. Paradoxically also, in that decade, popular opinion was readier to perceive the potentialities of the new, and ultimately the effective, weapons than were the military technicians.

It is no easier to establish the guilt of the people for the failure to draw a happier peace out of the war against Hitlerism. Lippmann would have us believe that the masses, infuriated with the delusions of the Four Freedoms and Unconditional Surrender, "would not allow their leaders to think about an eventual peace with their enemies, or about the differences that must arise among the Allies." Now there is much about the events of the last fifteen years that we still do not know; and no historian would venture to speak with certainty and without qualification until more facts are available. But a few features of wartime diplomacy are already clear, and among them is the fact that, for better or worse, the public slogans of the Four Freedoms and of Unconditional Surrender did not in the least trouble the consciences or inhibit the actions of the Allied leaders. For good or for evil, these shadowy phrases were readily tailored to the necessities of the immediate occasion.

Indeed, the source of the postwar difficulties seems rather to have been the series of compromises made among the wartime partners. And those compromises were arrived at in secret conferences without the pressure of public opinion, and often with the public completely deceived or in the dark as to their nature. Whatever one's judgment as to the desirability or necessity of these compromises, it certainly calls for a long leap of the imagination to hold the people responsible for them.

In truth, Lippmann's revolution of 1917 was no revolution at all. Public opinion has not since that date been decisive in the determination of foreign policy; nor, it may be said, was diplomacy in the democracies, before 1917, ever free of some degree of popular pressure. Certainly in the United States, the public always participated actively in the formulation of foreign policy. This whole aspect of Lippmann's argument is fallacious and without meaning.

It is also irrelevant to the genuine intentions of his book. Upon examination, the dramatic thesis of the crisis since 1917 proves to be but a trick, a contrived peg upon which to hang a larger, more serious argument. Brushing aside all the frothy rhetoric about the agonizing decline of the democracies in the last forty years, we begin to approach the heart of the Lippmann thesis.

This, after all, is not a book Lippmann began to write in 1945 or even in 1938; and the ideas it contains were not evoked by any particular crisis. Distrust of the popular element in American government and uneasiness as to the direction of democratic development have rather been constant themes in his writing and thinking. In *A Preface to Politics*, in *Drift and Mastery*, in *The Phantom Public*, and in other books, he has been working toward a broad theory of politics. In the *Public Philosophy* it stands forth fully developed. Within it, the whole focus on 1917 is but a fortuitous distraction. It is Lippmann's general theory of politics, with its roots in an important phase of American Progressive thought, that is really worth understanding.

In Lippmann's longer view of the history of democratic polity, the significant break comes not in 1917 but in 1789. For some two thousand years until then the practice of government had been dominated by the

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"Public Philosophy," by the belief that there was a law above the ruler and the people, above the whole community of mortals. Out of that belief sprang the traditions of civility, including as their three great notes, "the three values of Liberty, Equality and the brotherhood or Fraternity of all mankind." The Public Philosophy received expression in a variety of historic incidents and documents, such as the English Revolution of 1688, the American Revolution of 1776, the Bill of Rights, the Declaration of Independence, and the American Constitution. Toward the end of the 18th century, however, the hold of the philosophy on Western society was undermined. Insidious enemies attacked its principles and destroyed public faith in it. The decline of Western democracy, its loss of capacity to govern, is the end result; and that is why the revival of the Public Philosophy is inescapably necessary.

Lippmann also explains how the Public Philosophy has been undermined in the last hundred and fifty years. The decisive assault was launched by the "Jacobins," men resentful of their exclusion from the government, who used the conception of popular sovereignty to justify their own seizure of power. Engaged in pulling down rather than conserving authority, they abandoned the traditions of civility and elevated the revolutionary act to an end in itself. Preoccupied with power, they arrived finally at the doctrine that their ends justified any means and thus supplied a basis for modern totalitarianism. Having subverted modern education, the "Jacobin heresy" became "the popular and dominant theory in the schools" of the democracies. Jacobinism stands revealed therefore as the essential enemy of the Public Philosophy and of Western society.

There are painful ambiguities in Lippmann's conception of the Public Philosophy, as it is related both to his hopes for the recovery of Western society and to his diagnosis of its ills. By his own account, that philosophy for almost two thousand years proved altogether compatible with an extraordinary variety of forms of government—the Roman imperial order, medieval feudalism, the absolutism of the 17th century. Those polities were, to greater or lesser degrees, tyrannical; with none of them were associated the values Americans attach to their democracy. If the Public Philosophy has been elastic enough to embrace the despots of the past, it is difficult to see how it will protect us from those of the future.

THAT difficulty is inherent in Lippmann's conception of the Public Philosophy. He urges all men to accept the supremacy of law, the governors to govern in accordance with principles "upon which all rational men of good will, when fully informed, will tend to agree," the governed to acquiesce in the rule of the governors. The duty of the citizen is thus revealed in the experience of Socrates who refused to escape the unjust sentence by which Athens condemned him to death. His first, barbarian nature urged him to escape. But his "second and civilized nature" preferred to yield to the law of the state.

For Socrates, however, there was no law but that of the state; if he cherished the law he had no choice but to obey the state. Lippmann on the other hand wishes to believe in a natural law, anterior to and more universal than that of the state. What is his citizen to do in the event of a conflict between the two? Lippmann never confronts that crucial question because he fancifully identifies the law of nature with the law of the state that is its sole expounder and interpreter. It really does not matter then whether his citizen obeys because the statutes of the governing power embody the law of nature or obeys simply out of fear of the state's sanctions. His sole function is to obey.

Lippmann never once, in this book, realizes that the conception of a law of nature is meaningful only insofar as it is independent of the law of the state. Historically, the expounders of the doctrine of a natural law valued it precisely because it provided the individual citizen with a standard of judgment against which to assess the particular acts of government. And that process of assessment was futile if its only outcome were acquiescence; its significance springs rather

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from the path it opened to civic disobedience against the unjust acts of the state.

To some extent, the inability to understand what the idea of natural law has meant to those who expounded it accounts for Lippmann's wild belief that the "Jacobins" were responsible for the decline of the idea. "The Public Philosophy," he insists, "is in a deep contradiction with the Jacobin ideology," a "morbid development" which, alas, "is, in fact, the popular doctrine of the mass democracies." As Jacobinism gained currency toward the close of the 18th century, it stifled the traditions of civility, of liberty, equality, and fraternity, and of the Public Philosophy rooted in respect for natural law.

Unhappily, Lippmann is willfully blind whenever his discussion veers to the "Jacobins." The refusal to see or to remember blocks out the thought that it was the French Revolution with which the concepts of Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity were associated in Europe. Far from weakening the respect for natural law, the Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen gave that idea its widest currency in the 19th century.

But then Lippmann's Jacobins have nothing to do with the members of the historic political party; they are the fantastic figures of his own imagination. To create them, he must first draw a distinction between them and the respectable revolutionaries of our own tradition. The American Founding Fathers, Lippmann assures us, were quiet conservatives who objected to George III's tyranny but "were not saying that there was *no one* who was fit to be the ruler of a free people." In the soft, mellifluous flow of this prose, we almost forget that that was precisely what the Founding Fathers were saying; and that the government they created was without precedent in the West, being without king or nobility or establishments, or privilege or status.

IF LIPPMANN excludes the Americans from the companionship of the "Jacobins," he more than compensates by the variety of types he associates with them. Indiscriminately he jumbles together a procession of thinkers from d'Holbach and Diderot to Marx and Lenin, who have only this in common, that not one of them was actually connected with the historic party of the Jacobins. (Condorcet indeed lost his life on the guillotine in resistance to them.) This strange agglomeration of theorists Lippmann endows with a common attitude—hostility to order, with revolution an end in itself.

Now not even of the Jacobins proper is it accurate to say that they opposed "the moral foundations of authority." Of the 18th-century *philosophes*, and of their intellectual heirs, that judgment is an utter travesty. Effectively, the only function of the designation "Jacobin" is to smear, by association with ideas that were not theirs, the dominant exponents of the liberal tradition in 19th-century Europe.

If we separate out from Lippmann's mishmash the thinkers among whom there was continuity of ideas, from Diderot and Voltaire and Condorcet down, we shall find that it was they who were in their times the great defenders of the idea of natural law. They, above any other group, insisted upon constitutional process and the rule of law; and they most consistently upheld the traditions of civility, of liberty, equality, and fraternity.

And conversely we shall discover that it was their opponents, conservative and radical, who most violently assailed the concept of natural law. Marx and the Hegelian apologists of the Prussian state proceeded from almost identical premises in their assaults upon liberal ideology, just as Lenin and the Czar's advisers used almost identical notions of *raison d'état* in subversion of, or resistance to, constitutionalism. Intellectually, the weightiest attacks upon the conception of a natural and universal law took their points of departure in the writings of Burke and Montesquieu, conservative theorists for whom nevertheless Lippmann expresses perverse and extravagant admiration.

It is no coincidence therefore that the firmest barriers against the encroachment of present-day totalitarianism have been erected in the United States, in Great Britain, in

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France, and in Scandinavia, where the liberal democratic traditions are strongest. The polities least capable of resistance, on the other hand, have been those in which the established order stifled the development of liberal democracy. "The enfranchised masses have not, surprisingly enough, been those who have most staunchly defended the institutions of freedom," asserts our author. As we compare the states which survived with those which fell, the United States or France with Russia or Germany, and speculate on which masses were enfranchised, we arrive, not surprisingly, at the conclusion that this assertion and the line of argument it follows from are thoroughly erroneous.

There is no more justification for Lippmann's attack upon liberalism than for his assertion of popular responsibility for the failures of government since 1917. In both cases he indicts what Americans have always understood as democracy, and in both he reveals a deep animus against the "masses"—that is, against the people of a democracy. That animus has roots in the context of ideas that shaped Lippmann's development as a thinker and a publicist.

LIPPMANN'S distrust of the people is not simply to be explained as an aspect of the search for a conservative American tradition so pathetically fashionable among some intellectuals today. He proclaims himself still a liberal democrat, and although he has turned his face against many of the ideas associated with liberalism and democracy, he has a valid claim to that affiliation.

Nor is Lippmann's pessimism to be explained simply as the reaction to personal disappointment. More than any American of our time, he has gained the position to which all intellectuals aspire: he is listened to. He was scarcely out of college when he had found a respected place in journalism, a place from which he could always set his opinions before the makers of policy. No doubt he must think now, as he moves into his fifth decade of journalism, that he has been more listened to than heard and that his exhortations have rarely influenced the course of events. To the extent that he believes in the importance of his own role, he may now and again wonder at its ineffectuality; and self-examination occasionally confronts him with his errors in the past. Yet no trace of inner doubt intrudes into his writing. His disappointment is not with himself but with his society.

With regard to society, his expectations were those of the Progressives of the first decade of the century. The reformers of the time were by no means a homogeneous group. But some of the intellectuals among them—Herbert Croly, Lincoln Steffens, and the writers for the early *New Republic*—were defining a political position that still supplies Lippmann with his ultimate point of reference.

We may understand that position by asking a brutal question. Why does Lippmann, a democrat, believe that democracy, not totalitarianism, is in the decline? The Western governments, he asserts, need the "strong medicine" that dictatorships supply, and Hitler understood with "the insight of genius" the longing of the masses to be ruled. Lippmann's answer is that the totalitarian state is more capable of governing. Its ruling elite are surrounded by "an aura of majesty, which causes them to be obeyed. That aura emanates from a popular belief that they have subjected themselves to a code and . . . a discipline by which they are dedicated to ends that transcend their personal desires."

We know this judgment is delusive. Few Nazi or Bolshevik bosses were ever naive enough to ride through town protected by their aura of majesty alone. The very existence of elaborate regimes of terror showed the unwillingness of those elites to rely only on loyalty for obedience. The enormous power the totalitarian state disposes is usually sufficient to stifle resistance. But when the occasion has presented itself, the masses have demonstrated an inclination to desert that indicates they do not altogether love their rulers.

Furthermore, the same yardsticks by which Lippmann measures the decline of the democracies would also reveal the weakness

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of the dictatorships. Nothing in the Western record equals in ineptitude the comic quadrille in which Hitler, Stalin, Matsuoka, and Mussolini played at being partners between 1939 and 1941—and without the distractions of public opinion. No American error since the war matched in magnitude the Soviet blunders that helped create the Marshall Plan and NATO and restored the power of Western Europe.

The judgment that the totalitarian powers provide more effective government does not proceed from the evidence of recent events. It proceeds rather from Lippmann's definition of the function of government. The "natural and necessary duties" of a government, he writes, "have to do with the defense and advancement abroad of the vital interests of the state and with its order, security, and solvency at home." These interests are entirely abstracted from the interests of the people who happen to be residents of the state; Lippmann is insistent that the people, in this sense, are not the proper objects of the state's attention.

The people as voters therefore cannot be adequate formulators of policy; they know only their own interests, not those of the state. The true public interest, on the other hand, is "what men would choose if they saw clearly, thought rationally, acted disinterestedly and benevolently." The decisions of politics, Lippmann holds, should be arrived at much the way a series of equations is solved; and assemblies elected by the masses of voters are incapable of solving equations.

And here we reach the inner core of Lippmann's Progressivism. For who but the disinterested social engineer is most at home in the higher mathematics of politics? Back then, in the youth of the century, the intellectuals nurtured the noble dream of a total reform of their society. Human nature was malleable and they, the elite, would reshape the suffering masses. Their ideas would unfold in plans of action which would be implemented through politics.

The plans were not realized; the outcome was not what the necessities of logic dictated. Yet those who had put their faith in the idea and the plan knew that they had seen clearly, thought rationally, acted disinterestedly and benevolently. The fault had not been in themselves. Then where? As Progressives they could see no end for history but Progress, and they could account for the tragedies of their time only by finding someone to blame. The fault was in the brute mass, incapable of receiving the idea, unable to follow where it should be led.

IT HAS been a long way intellectually for Walter Lippmann since the days when he went to work with Lincoln Steffens. But in the face of the intractable democratic mass, he feels the same discomfort as did many of the Progressives of his youth. And after all these years Lippmann still does not understand wherein the popular conception of government differs from his own.

The people have not held that the end of government was to advance the interests of the state, but rather that it was to "establish justice, insure domestic tranquillity, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty." Politics was thus one of a variety of means of social action directed at goals meaningful and important to the people as individuals. They have therefore considered themselves competent to judge the degree to which particular acts of government approach or fall short of their general social ends. Political decisions have not consisted in the discovery of mathematically correct solutions to equations but rather in choices made among feasible alternatives that might advance the interests of the greatest number.

Hence the people have not often turned for guidance to an intellectual elite. "Providence," they have believed, "never intended to make the management of public affairs a mystery, to be comprehended only by a few persons of sublime genius." Rather, like the Lilliputians, they have supposed that "truth, justice, temperance, and the like" were "in every man's power, the practice of which virtues, assisted by experience and a good intention, would qualify any man for

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the service of his country"; and generally in "choosing persons for all employments" they had "more regard to good morals than to great abilities."

And in retrospect, we cannot believe they were wrong. "Successful democratic politicians," Lippmann tells us, "are insecure and intimidated men." To an American the figures of his own most successful politicians spring immediately to mind—Washington, Jefferson, Jackson, Lincoln, the Roosevelts, Wilson, and Truman. Which among them were the insecure and intimidated? And which among them failed both to gain a full measure of trust from the people and all the powers he needed to govern as an executive within the Constitution?

The miracle of democratic leadership is the continuing refutation of Lippmann's fears. The virtue of popular government is to maintain and strengthen those governors who remain close to the people, and to weaken those who attempt to pull away.

There is no cause for despair. The disheartened were already reading Toynbee before 1939, Spengler even earlier, and Brooks Adams long before. Their forebodings of decline were the record of their own loss of faith. Meanwhile the record of the democracies, imperfect as it may be in the face of the monumental problems of the past half-century, nevertheless justifies the confidence that this last best hope on earth will do more than survive.

LIQUIDATION SALE

CHARLES G. BELL

From the flat fields of the Delta and waves of woods,
We come to a little town with its cotton gin,
Beulah or Boyle, the pattern is the same,
As weird as familiar. How many hours
Have I sat in an oven car by these clapboard stores?

That was in the depression, a terrible time,
Between the dust and flood, the people drained;
I would drive my father then from town to town,
While he talked, encouraged, farmed the debts, and came.
He was known to all and honored as the judge.

Well, he deserved some honor. He saved their skins
Often when city firms would have had them sued,
Eased them along to his peril, gave up his fees,
Himself the most in debt and the life-dream torn
By politicians and a failing farm.

Private loss and Hitler—our world betrayal.
At night I have seen him when he could not sleep
Sit up in bed to light his pipe, the weak
Flame rising and falling like the pulse of his hope,
Revealing a face whose lines made me weep.

So I live it all again in the sun-baked towns,
That scourge of bitterness which must return
As rust from these tin awnings, painted now—
Where like a token the great "Liquidation Sale"
Blossoms in red on Solomon's old store.

Charles G. Bell, who teaches in the humanities at the University of Chicago, is the author of *Songs for a New America* (1953), a book of verse. This is his second appearance with a poem in our pages.

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UNSENTIMENTAL JOURNEY TO VIENNA

A Native Jew's Welcome Home

BENNO WEISER

THE hitchhiker I picked up on the Arlberg Pass was Viennese, with all the honeyed politeness and eagerness to please of a Viennese. There wasn't much traffic that afternoon in early May, and he was very grateful. Having noticed the French plates on my little Renault, he made some flattering remarks about France.

"I'm not French," I said.

"I thought not," said he, "your German is too good. You must be German. Bavarian, I presume."

For the next few moments I had to concentrate on passing a big truck ahead on the winding road. My companion took my silence to be a confirmation of his statement, and he immediately began celebrating the German-Austrian comradeship in arms during the recent war; a Bavarian had been his closest buddy in the army. I was amused by his flexibility, and said I was not a German.

"Well, where do you come from, if I may ask?"

"At the moment," I answered, "from the United States."

"America!" he exclaimed. "Where would we be without America? The Marshall Plan, Point Four—what a terrific, generous, idealistic country!" After all, what had the Russians done for Austria? But America! What great guys Eisenhower and Dulles were, and Truman and Acheson too! He was taking no chances.

When he had finished I said, "Look here, let's finish this game. This country used to be my home. I was kicked out. I'm a Jew."

Though startled for a moment, he did not lose his presence of mind. "Frankly," he said, "if you hadn't admitted it yourself, I never would have believed it."

That's where I came in, I thought. Here we go again. There had been the *Anschluss,* a war, defeat, "liberation," and occupation; there had been destruction, death, destitution—but otherwise nothing had changed. I remembered the story of the man who, receiving a wire that his mother-in-law had died in Vienna, had cried jubilantly, *"Wien bleibt Wien!"* Vienna remained Vienna. The greatest compliment my companion could pay me, a chance stranger, was that I could pass as an "Aryan."

I WAS born in the Austrian empire, just about the time it began to disintegrate. In 1918 my birthplace became part of Rumania. I began my career as a refugee at the age of nine months. My father was in the army, and my mother was unable to take both of her children with her in her departure from my native Czernovitz for Austria proper, so my grandmother, then visiting us, took me along when she returned to Poland. I was restored to my family in Vienna two years later, and had acquired in the meantime two grandmother tongues, Polish and Yiddish. I forgot Polish very soon, and later had to relearn Yiddish, but both left their mark on my early German. I was teased about my intonation by classmates and teachers, and straightened it out in later years. But I never adopted the Viennese dialect. I wanted to speak impeccable German, but stubbornly refused to disguise myself in order to be taken for Viennese-born—or anything other than the Jew I was.

Now that formal peace has come to Austria and, with it, sovereignty, it becomes more important than ever to understand the country where such a large part of the recent Jewish past lies buried. The view BENNO WEISER offers is an inside one, glimpsed through the eyes of a native who renounced Austria and was, as a Jew, renounced by her. This is not Mr. Weiser's first appearance in these pages. In August 1954, we published his article "Ben Gurion's Dispute with American Zionists" and, in December 1953, his "Dictators, Democracy, and Latin American Jewry." Mr. Weiser, now an Israeli citizen, worked as a journalist in South America; at present he occupies a post with the Jewish Agency in New York City.

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Nevertheless, I shall probably always feel myself to be a Viennese. A Jew had no reason to think of himself as an outsider in a city that owed so much of its physiognomy, fame, and atmosphere to Jews. No one described the sentimental, charmingly frivolous, and weak-willed man of Vienna with more insight and affection than Arthur Schnitzler, a Jew. There was also Stefan Zweig, probably the most widely read of any Austrian writer. And there were Franz Werfel, Felix Salten, Richard Beer-Hoffman, Peter Altenberg, Hermann Broch, and scores of other Jewish writers who lived in postwar Vienna and made it a literary center. Hugo von Hofmannsthal was part Jewish.

The Viennese theater was, to a great extent, a Jewish affair. Though most of the actors were Gentile, the great playwrights and directors, among them Max Reinhardt, were predominantly Jews. To Viennese music, Gustav Mahler, the German-born Bruno Walter, Arnold Schoenberg, E. W. Korngold, and Fritz Kreisler contributed immeasurably. At least every other Viennese hit tune that has survived is the work of a Jewish composer of the rank of Oscar Strauss, Leo Fall, Emeric Kalman, Paul Abraham, Ralph Benatzky. Even that most beloved and typical of all Viennese songs, the *"Fiakerlied,"* was written by a Jew. And the Strausses of waltz fame were of Jewish descent.

If Vienna up to World War II was a mecca for students of medicine, much of the credit likewise belongs to Jews. To pick a few names out of many, there was Landsteiner, who discovered blood-types; Otto Loewy, now in this country, who won the Nobel Prize for his discoveries in the field of muscle chemistry; Bela Schick, likewise now in the United States, who devised the test for diphtheria named after him; Pirquet (a half-Jew in Nazi terminology) who discovered the test for tuberculosis named after him; Rudolf Kraus, discoverer of precipitin; Koller, discoverer of cocain anesthesia for the eye; Freund, who blazed a trail in the therapeutic use of X-ray; Heinrich Neumann, the otologist; the anatomists Zuckerkandl and Tandler; the pathologist Erdheim; the histologist Marburg; the pediatrician Knoepfelmacher. And there was, of course, Sigmund Freud, and his disciples. Not without justification did the caustic Karl Kraus, another Jew, define psychoanalysis as the appropriation of the Confessional by the Jews of Vienna.

I DEFINITELY felt at home in Vienna. But though as a youngster I wore Alpine leather shorts and a gray-green *loden* jacket, the national costume, the countryside was another matter—the Austrian peasant, the Styrian mountaineer, and the yodeling Tyrolean were hopelessly prejudiced. Lovely as the Austrian mountains were, I could not look at an imposing peak without wondering whether the hostel on its slope adhered to the "Aryan paragraph." Hotel owners, restaurateurs, chambermaids, waiters, porters, and busboys were, I knew, all confirmed anti-Semites. The more money they made from Jewish tourists, domestic and foreign, the more anti-Semitic they seemed to get. Salzburg, whose famous artistic festivals were founded by Max Reinhardt, was one of the most anti-Semitic towns in Austria, and a joke has it that its inhabitants used to shout *"Heil Cohen!"* in the summer and *"Heil Hitler!"* in the winter.

So when vacation time came, I usually chose to travel abroad. Abroad I felt more Austrian than in Austria, and it was pleasant to be an Austrian abroad. Austrians were, and still are, well liked—because, I suppose, they are not considered Germans, but "the transition from the Germanic to the civilized." Abroad, gaiety is attributed to all things Austrian. Wine, women, and song spring to the mind, the music of Haydn, Beethoven, Mozart, Schubert, and, of course, the operettas of the Strausses and Lehar. The reality of all this, the tradition of the "dancing" Congress of Vienna of 1814, belongs more to the past than present. But not even the terrible war started by an Austrian, and in which Austrians had, proportionately, no less a record of sadism and barbarism than Germans, has been able today to dispel the Austrian reputation for *Gemütlichkeit* and friendliness.

I, for my part, had no reluctance in the pre-Hitler days to exploit this reputation on my visits abroad. I did not have the feeling of being an impostor. I was certain that the two hundred thousand Jews of my country had contributed more by far than their share to Austria's popularity, and that this was as much due to Freud, Zweig, and

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Mahler as to its yodelers, skiers, and zither players.

As it happened, Jews in those days felt more secure in Germany than in Austria. There had long been a *Judenfrage* in Austria, though between 1918 and the rise of Nazism it was by no means oppressive: if in Rumania and Poland anti-Semitism could be compared with T.B., in the Austria of those years it amounted to no more than a chronic cold. Outside the universities, it seldom meant more than epithets, hostile remarks by a drunkard, or occasional unfriendliness from officials. The endemic anti-Semitism of Vienna was mitigated by the city's equally endemic *Schlamperei;* so that Karl Lueger, its outspokenly anti-Semitic mayor of pre-1914 days, could defend his friendships with Jews with the famous words: "I decide who's a Jew."

Nonetheless, it was hard for a Jew to obtain public office or to be promoted once he had one, and he was handicapped in an academic career. Also, it was rather difficult for a sensitive Jew to embrace Austrian nationalism, with its Teutonic orientation. Though the little country, and especially Vienna, contained a mixture of peoples, the heroic legends we learned in history class were all Germanic.

It was in Vienna, too, that the highly assimilated Theodor Herzl came to the conclusion that assimilation was unfeasible in the long run and that the Jewish solution lay in an independent state. But it was the Dreyfus Affair that was the decisive shock, revealing as it did that Jews could still be baited even in Europe's most advanced democracy. One had needed no such shock as far as Austria was concerned.

Was it an accident that the most rabid anti-Semite of all time was an Austrian? The German contribution to Hitler's mania was only the thoroughness of its application, not the original madness of it. Dislike of the Jew was more deeply rooted in the Austrian than in the German, which made the effort of many Austrian Jews to flee from their Jewishness particularly frantic. Under the monarchy the preferred method was through conversion, mostly to Catholicism. (A great number of the Jews mentioned in this article were baptized.) Under the republic it became escape from religion altogether. The official name for this was "exit from Jewry," which meant ceasing to be a member of the Jewish community. The popular excuse in terms of principles was provided by the Social Democratic party, which had an anti-clerical tendency (though very few of its Gentile members actually left the Church). Many of the party's leaders and thinkers were Jews, but to most of Austrian Jewry socialism represented, at least subconsciously, a way of assimilation rather than an economic or political doctrine. On the other hand, Vienna produced only three Zionists of world stature besides Herzl: Rabbi Z. P. Chajes, Robert Stricker, and Adolf Boehm.

My "Aryan" classmates in high school were largely German nationalists, with a few Nazis among them. We Jews got along quite well with them, even so. The Nazis were against Jews in the abstract, but not against those they knew personally; we hated the Nazis, but not the fellow students whom we kidded, played with in the school gymnasium, and allowed to copy from our papers during tests. Things became rough only with the rising tide of Nazism in Germany, and they became particularly so at the University of Vienna, where no *Anschluss* was necessary to establish a Nazi regime. There, the student body was made up of youths from the Austrian provinces as well as from Vienna, so that the German nationalists and Nazis had a solid majority. In the liberal professions especially, where Jewish competition was most keenly felt, anti-Semitism became much more than a vague expression of political leanings—it was a practical way of preventing Jews from getting their degrees.

A few professors would set higher standards for Jews than for Gentiles, but most of them had too much professional rectitude to go very far in this direction. The task of reducing the proportion of Jewish graduates was left to the "Aryan" students themselves, who would from time to time gang up for physical assaults on Jewish students. In addition to being in the overwhelming majority, they had the advantage of the offensive and could choose the times for their attacks, which made the chances of Jewish self-defense very small. Nor were the police permitted to interfere; ironically enough the

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regulation excluding police interference had been established centuries before in order to prevent the kings and emperors from violating academic freedom. The republic continued to grant this privilege to the universities of Austria, and an end was put to the abuse only by the dictatorship of Dollfuss and Schuschnigg, whose fascist tendencies did not prevent them from being violently anti-Nazi.

After the suppression of the uprising of the Social Democratic Schutzbund in February 1934, which the dictatorship itself had provoked, and after an abortive Nazi revolt in July of the same year, in which Dollfuss was assassinated, his successor, Schuschnigg, put Austrian Nazis in concentration camps. At the same time there was not much significant change in the status of Austrian Jews under Dollfuss and Schuschnigg, except that flight into Catholicism again became fashionable, having become once more an almost absolute prerequisite for certain jobs on the government payroll. Though the Schuschnigg regime had few sympathizers among Jews, they had, in the face of the Hitler threat, to pray for its survival.

When, in the late afternoon of March 13, 1938, rumors ran through the streets and coffee houses of Vienna, and we rushed home to wait for an important broadcast that, according to constant announcements, was forthcoming—we felt that something precious and dear was at stake: our status as full citizens of Austria.

On the radio at least, the Austrian republic died beautifully. While we waited, Haydn's *Emperor Quartet* was played, with its variations of the tune that, with different words, had become both the Austrian and the German national anthem. It was to the accompaniment of that beautiful hymn that we were transferred from the *"Sei gesegnet ohne Ende"* of the Austrian republic to the *"Deutschland, Deutschland, über Alles"* of Hitler's Germany. Then came Dr. Schuschnigg's farewell address telling us that German troops had just marched across the border. At the end of his speech there were tears in the eyes of all of us who had gathered for the family Sabbath eve dinner. The tears were not for ourselves alone; some went for Austria—she had, to be sure, been an unhappy love for us, but a love nonetheless.

For opportune reasons, the *Anschluss* was viewed by the outside world as Germany's rape of Austria, and after the war Austria exploited this conception. But I cannot think of it without remembering the story of the woman who on her second appearance in court as a victim of rape told the bewildered judge, "I rape very easily, your honor."

So did Austria. Some of her Catholic rulers opposed the *Anschluss* with heart and soul, but the rank and file of the dictatorship's para-military arm, the Heimwehr, found it rather easy to go over to the Nazis. (The present Chancellor of Austria, Julius Raab, was one of the Heimwehr's founders.) The Heimwehr had fascist leanings anyhow, being nationalistic to the hilt—and Austrian nationalism was always Germanic. If the Heimwehr troupe and the clerico-fascists had not been openly anti-Semitic, it was only because they did not despise contributions from the Jewish industrialists and businessmen who saw in them a dike, however insecure, against Nazism. But it was hardly necessary to stir them up against the Jews. As for the Austrian Social Democrats, they hated the Dollfuss-Schuschnigg regime with such intensity that its disappearance did not evoke any regret on their part, even though it meant the disappearance of Austria. Their hatred of Austro-Fascism, which was near, became for many Austrian Socialists an inducement to accept the Nazis, who were less near, or seemed less near. In any case, resistance to the Germans would have been suicidal.

But nobody who saw the throngs that hailed the Wehrmacht and Hitler in Austria could honestly view the *Anschluss* as a "rape." Austria might have been only 25, 35, or 40 per cent Nazi on the eve of the *Anschluss,* but hardly one out of nine Austrian Gentiles was without a swastika pin in his lapel the day after the Germans arrived.

Austrian Jewry was despoiled, if under German supervision, mostly by Austrians—both old Austrian Nazis and Austrians who had jumped on the Nazi bandwagon. Most of the commissars put in charge of Jewish enterprises were Austrian, and most of the purchasers of Jewish property—at a fraction of its true value—were Austrian (what they paid went into blocked accounts and not to the Jewish owners). Most of the SA and SS

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men who later liquidated Austrian Jewry physically were Austrian, though some of them had received their indoctrination and training in Germany. Austria contributed a fair proportion of the staffs of Hitler's concentration camps, their killers, torturers, and bullies. Last but not least, the crowds that on the morrow of the *Anschluss* assaulted and humiliated Jews in the streets of Vienna and elsewhere, were entirely Austrian. What happened during those days will remain Austria's eternal shame.

I am aware that mobs are mobs everywhere. What distinguished the Austrian mobs of March 1938 was their size—and the social and cultural level of many of their members. Hitler let loose the scum wherever he went, and the scum of Eastern Europe may have behaved worse than the scum of Austria. But west of Poland nobody, not even the Germans, matched the Austrians in what they did to Jews. Leaving Austria in September of 1938, I had to spend several days in Germany, and I still remember the sense of relief that I had there.

At that time Hitler had ruled Germany for almost six years, and Austria for only six months. With a knapsack as my only luggage, without a swastika in my lapel, I was easily recognizable in the West German border towns as one of the many Jews then trying to cross over into Holland, Belgium, Luxemburg, or France. But I do not remember a single derogatory remark or unfriendly gesture; even the Gestapo man whose advice I asked—because I had official permission for my transit—was friendly and helpful. It struck me that his anti-Semitism must have been impersonal. That of the Austrians was quite different.

NEVERTHELESS, one of the first things I tried to do once I reached my ultimate destination, which was South America, was to get rid of the German passport that had been issued to me (since Austria no longer existed as a sovereign state). What I felt about the behavior of my fellow Austrians was beside the point. To be listed for all practical purposes as a German seemed to me too offensive in view of what Germany had brought upon me and my fellow Jews. I had been an Austrian citizen both by birth and by residence, and I preferred to remain one rather than bear the label of a country to which I had never belonged, and which had become in my eyes the epitome of every frightfulness. But it was not always easy to convince the Ecuadorian authorities that I was an Austrian and not a German.

"You have a German passport," said the legal adviser of the Ecuadorian Foreign Office in 1943.

"I did not ask for it," was my answer. "My country was invaded."

"All right," said the Ecuadorian. "Where were you born?"

"In Czernovitz," answered I.

"What country is Czernovitz in?"

"Oh, please," I begged, "don't go into that. We'll only get lost."

But he insisted, and so I said, "When I was born in Czernovitz, it was in Austria. After World War I it became Rumania. On the eve of World War II the Russians occupied it. During this war the Germans conquered it, and now the Russians have reconquered it."

"In this case," said the legal adviser, after due deliberation, "you are for me, at best, a White Russian."

I was a little exasperated, and said, "Look here, when I was born in Czernovitz, it was in Austria. When I moved from Czernovitz to Vienna, both Czernovitz and Vienna were in Austria. I did not emigrate. Czernovitz did." That did it.

But if I stuck to my Austrian citizenship because I did not want to be either German or stateless, distance in time and space has not made the dark prints in my memory fade. There were, of course, those sentimental Viennese songs like *"Wien, Wien, nur Du allein"* that you sang when a night-club pianist happened to play it because you knew the words. You sang it, in full awareness of its treacle and falseness, in memory of your youth, not the charms of a town or a country. But news of Austria in the headlines or over the radio hardly awakened any more interest in me than news of any other European country. Once I had wanted to love her. Then came resentment, and even hatred. Now only indifference was left.

IT TOOK my hitchhiker a few minutes to recover from the disclosure that I was Jewish. Then the emotion I must have been showing as I gazed at the landscape struck him. In what seemed to be genuine surprise,

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he asked, "Aren't the Jews supposed to have no *Heimatsgefühl?*" And he stuttered apologetically, "I mean aren't they cosmopolitans?"

"I suppose," I answered, "that it's only natural that a man should love the place where he was born. Only his fellow man can change this feeling into bitterness. But there's nothing now to keep me from feeling the beauty of this landscape. After all, the mountains didn't pin on swastikas, the trees didn't don brown shirts, and the rivers didn't shout Heil Hitler!"

My companion tried to explain himself. He did not say that he had not been a Nazi, but he asked me to remember the miseries of pre-war Austria, the thousands of unemployed, the despair of the "little man." Small wonder if some thought that little Austria joined to big Germany could improve its lot. Yes, there was a celebration when the Germans came, but six months later everyone was already fed up, and then the war came. Who the hell had wanted a war? He had been in the army for five years, and a prisoner in Russia for another five. Who would give those ten wasted years back to him?

After a lull in the conversation he asked how much I was paying for my hired car, and when I told him I saw him mentally multiply the dollars by twenty-five, which made a rather staggering sum in Austrian shillings. Then he made an effort to convince me that not all Austrians were Nazis, and not all Nazis anti-Semites. He was noncommittal, however, about his own past.

When I dropped him at his destination he stood for a moment looking at my little car, evidently thinking of what it was costing me. Then he said, "You can be sure of one thing. We Austrians don't hate anybody any more. We just envy."

IT TOOK me four days, because I dawdled, to reach Vienna. As I drove into the city the old distances and sizes seemed amazingly shrunken, and I found myself on the central Ringstrasse much sooner than I had expected. The city looked like a toy model of the one in my memory. But things had changed in fact as well as appearance. There were gaps among the houses like missing teeth, and everything seemed somehow a little out of shape. Even the Opernkreuzung, which in bygone days had bustled with traffic, and was still the busiest intersection in Vienna, looked abandoned. With pounding heart and a feeling of sadness, I drove into Leopoldstadt, the old Jewish section where my family had lived. There had been a lot of war here, and the scars were not well healed. Once Leopoldstadt had teemed with Jewish life, but only now, when there were no Jews left in it, did it look like a ghetto.

Nine years after the war's end, the elevator was still out of order in the house where we had lived, and the windows overlooking the backyard were still boarded up, darkening the hallways. The streets looked strangely empty, yet there were just as many people living in Leopoldstadt as before. Only one store sign bore a name I remembered. Leopoldstadt had become strange, too, to many of the people still living in it.

Among the very few people I called on were two women who had worked for us as maids and who had remained loyal to the family in the months after the *Anschluss*. Tears sprang to their eyes when they recognized me. Yes, those were the good old days. Yes, the Nazis were gone, but they had left ghosts behind. Who knew whether these ghosts would ever disappear? Gone was neighborliness and trust, the good will and sincerity of the people next door. Life had become drab and empty.

Continuing to pursue memories, I visited my old high school. It was a moment I had long anticipated. Somewhat to my irrational surprise, the building was still standing. And I found out that my old math teacher was still alive, retired now and on a pension. I had a cup of coffee with him in a coffee house. We talked about what had become of the other teachers, and I noticed that he mentioned only the "Aryan" ones. I had to ask him point-blank about the Jewish teachers. It was obvious that he had to refer to a completely different file cabinet in his mind: the difference between Gentile and Jew had become so engrained that, even a decade after the Nazis, Jews remained another category of human beings.

Then I asked, "What's Vienna like without Jews?"

"Aren't they back?" he answered, astonished.

They were 9,000 out of 180,000. One did not have to be a teacher of mathematics to

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realize that this made no more than 5 per cent. Even so, he did not seem happy about the 5 per cent. "There's Herr Leopoldi, for instance," he said, referring to a popular composer-pianist who had returned from exile in the United States. "When he landed in New York he knelt down on the pier and kissed the asphalt. He should have stayed there." Then he added with a smirk, "But when he came back to Austria he kissed the ground, too."

"Maybe he's very sensuous," I answered, simply in order to say something. There would have been little use lecturing the seventy-year-old man. Yet he appeared moved by my visit and certainly wanted to be friendly—among other reasons because, as it later turned out, he expected a donation. Obviously, he was not aware of how he sounded.

I found the same lack of sensitivity on this particular subject in other Viennese. The killing of Jews was over; they no longer wore yellow stars and were not being deported and gassed. But even people who had always been friendly with Jews, and had remained so, were not entirely immune to the "devaluation" they had undergone by virtue merely of the fact that for seven years there had been an open season on Jewish lives in Austria.

My old teacher at the Anatomic Institute, now its highest ranking associate professor, whom I visited next, could by no means be considered an anti-Semite. He received me with open arms. He had been dismissed by the Nazis in 1938, and because he had remained faithful to his Jewish sweetheart, who had been in my class at medical school, he was jailed for "race defilement," while she was sent to Auschwitz. Then he was released from jail and drafted into the army, as a mere medic, owing to his "political unreliability." Captured by the British in Africa, he had spent a few years in a P.O.W. camp in the United States, where he had run into trouble because he belonged to the anti-Nazi minority among the prisoners. He had returned to Vienna in 1945, found his old sweetheart, who by some miracle had survived, and married her.

I repeated the question I had asked my old mathematics teacher: "What's Vienna like without Jews?" He was taken aback, thought for a while, and then said with a chuckle, "You see, *Herr Kollege*, we manage. Oh, yes," he interrupted himself, "the other day at the theater they put on *Linen from Ireland*. You probably remember that one of the characters is supposed to speak with a Jewish accent. He did it badly."

AUSTRIA was indeed managing without her Jews. The universities were now only average. The theater was still very good, thanks particularly to its surviving pre-Nazi actors, whose ranks had been swelled by some Jewish repatriates. But all the plays were old or imported. Not a single one by a living Austrian playwright was being performed. I did not have the time to find out what was going on in the literary field, but I was able to get some notion from the Viennese papers. Most of them, though retaining their old prestige-laden names, had become provincial and were written in a mechanical, colorless German. What, apparently, had remained almost as good as ever was musical life.

In the 20's Hugo Bettauer had written a novel, *The Town without Jews*, about what Vienna would be like if the anti-Semites had their way. His fantasy was not completely realized, but only because the gap left by the departure of the Jews in the Austrian economy was being filled by American money. But the novelist (who was shot to death a few years later) had not been too far off.

Vienna was still charming to tourists who, if ignorant of the old Vienna, could take the new provincialism for the old *Gemütlichkeit*, and enjoy the low prices, rich food, magnificent views, the lively theatrical and musical life, and the inexhaustible supply of sentimental songs, which benefited by age the way cheese and wine do. True, most Austrians seemed to feel that they had lost something, but it hardly occurred to them that that something might be, in part, the liveliness and cosmopolitanism of the Jews. So many things had changed since the *Anschluss*, the war, the "liberation," and the occupation that it was hard for them to isolate the factors accounting for their mental discomfort.

The occupation, the Russian side of it, might have played a part. It was certainly a nuisance, though people seemed to have become accustomed to it. "What's it like

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living so close to the Iron Curtain?" I asked my old professor at the Anatomic Institute. "Well, *Herr Kollege,*" he said. "We know that we have to die, but we live as if there were no death. The same way, we live as if there were no Russians."

Yet there was a great amount of uneasiness. Many people I met had either tried to emigrate or were toying with the idea. There were many difficulties in their way. The American quota for Austria was small, and filled for years to come. Also, there was the fear of a strange land on the part of those who lacked money and connections. But the woman who approached me during an intermission at the Academie Theater was certainly not an exception. Apparently, she had seen me arrive in my foreign car, and she started the conversation by asking where I was from; her husband was chatting with some other people a few yards away. Then she asked me whether it was true that, in the United States, Negroes could not live wherever they wanted to. "What makes you so interested in that?" I asked her. She answered, "I wouldn't mind leaving my husband here and marrying some American Negro sergeant in order to get out of here."

VISITING one of the famous *Heuriger* cafés, I suddenly realized something that I had been unaware of during my old days in Vienna. The café life, the singing, the gentle intoxication produced by the *Heuriger* (new) wine, the intimacy, and the *Gemütlichkeit* were all part of a scheme for escaping reality, and had been serving that purpose since long before Hitler and the war. Under the gaiety produced by alcohol and music lay a real sadness. Gay Vienna belonged to the past, and its people were just acting out roles and doing the expected. The thought that the men singing at the tables around me might be the same who, ten years before, had murdered Jews like myself in Eastern Europe, began to spoil my pleasure. During my entire stay in Vienna I could not look at one of the attractive, well-filled-out girls in whom the city abounds without wondering how she would have reacted to a Jew ten years earlier.

I found out that the Jews who had come back to Vienna to stay did not feel very differently from me. Their number was small. Of nine thousand, only about two-thirds were originally Austrian, the rest having been brought in by the war and its aftermath. One-third of the native Austrian Jews now back in the country live in homes for the aged or on pensions. Of the remaining four thousand, some had stayed in Austria throughout the war and miraculously survived. Consequently, the number of actual returnees is very small, probably less than 2 per cent of all those who departed. And even this 2 per cent includes many Jews who spent their exile in Shanghai. These figures speak for themselves. Most of those who returned did so for practical reasons. Some had been owners of factories that they managed to get back. Others were lawyers, actors, and writers who, for reasons of age or language, could not make an adjustment abroad.

In the Theater in der Josephstadt, I saw *The Teahouse of the August Moon,* translated into German by Oscar Karlweis, a Jew, who acted in it along with another Jew, Hans Yarai. One of the Gentile actors had been head of the Nazi cell in that same theater, and I wondered how they felt playing opposite him. I asked an acquaintance who had returned from the United States, but had retained his American citizenship, and married a young Viennese Gentile, how he felt as a Jew living in Vienna. He answered, in his wife's presence, "Oh, it's very simple. All you have to do is close both eyes and ears." We went to the Kobenzl bar, which enjoys a beautiful view of Vienna's lights at night. After we had sat down, he said, "You know, I always have the impression that people feel uneasy when I come in. I don't know what they think. Do they wonder how I survived or why on earth I came back? Maybe I look like a ghost to them—and who's comfortable in the presence of a ghost?"

I talked with a Jewish lawyer who had been prominent in the Social Democratic party. He was a typical Viennese. We paid an afternoon visit to his special *Heuriger.* As I saw him look, glass in hand, down past the vineyards of Sievering at the church towers of Vienna rising out of the mist, I understood how much a part of the setting he was. He had spent the Hitler years abroad, and he made no bones about why he had returned. "Look," he said, "I'm too old to fight with prepositions in a foreign

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language. I've been a lawyer for forty years. Why should I be a handy man or a sales clerk somewhere else if I can practice my profession here?" A little surprised by the amount of time which he devoted to me, I asked him, "And how is social life?" He looked at me and said, "Social life with whom? My Social Democratic colleagues? Oh, yes, we meet at official receptions, but I don't want to visit their homes, or have them in mine. They're no better than the others. As a matter of fact, I think that the only Austrians who've learned a lesson and feel a little closer to the Jews are the Catholic leaders who suffered under the Nazis."

Among the Jewish returnees I also found quite a few people from Israel. They had returned at the height of Israel's austerity period to the goulash pots of Vienna, mostly with the idea of getting their restitution claims settled. They were careful to retain their right to return to Israel, but their presence has somewhat dampened the admiration that, according to Arieh Eshel, Israel's consul in Vienna, was felt in official circles for "that other type of Jew," the Israeli. There were some cranks and misfits among these returnees. In Tel Aviv, a few weeks later, the Austrian consul, Hartl, mentioned the complaints that one of them, before leaving for Vienna, had made to him about the Israeli government. "But I told him that Hitler hadn't succeeded in making an anti-Semite out of me, and that he wouldn't either."

THERE is no question about where Austria stands vis-à-vis Russia. Her traditions and civilization, the chance that the presence of Russian troops has given Austrians to judge Soviet society, the proximity of the satellite "paradises," and—more than anything else—her own interests make her entirely pro-Western. Besides, the new Austria is a democracy—with a vengeance.

Arthur Miller's *The Crucible,* which I saw at the Burgtheater, had an informal prologue, penned by the management, that drew a parallel between witch-hunting in the United States now and then. Such amazing self-righteousness and complacency could be explained in part by a selective amnesia that enabled the Austrians to regard themselves as victims, and nothing else, of Hitler's war. But this feeling of superiority to America was also part of a Europe-wide phenomenon, a feeling of *Schadenfreude* over the colossus' imperfections, a way of "getting even" with a too powerful friend.

I caught a glimpse of the confusion attending upon all this when I finally located a Nazi classmate who had survived. There had been no bad feeling between us personally during our high school days. Later on, when he was studying philosophy at the university, he had come over to me one day and warned me that there was going to be an anti-Semitic brawl. Now we met at a *Kaffeehaus.* He looked trim and well, though he was limping as a result of a war wound. He had become a teacher.

"What are you teaching your pupils?" I asked him.

He said innocently, "History."

"History isn't mathematics," I said. "It's not an exact science. Where do you put the emphasis, especially when you come to the last twenty years?"

He looked at me with amazement and said, "You know, I never thought of that. I teach ancient history, and never touch on the modern period. And now that I think of it, I'm rather happy I don't have to."

He told me that his world had collapsed with Germany's defeat. He had been ready then to re-learn. There seemed to be something superior in democracy, after all, since it had defeated Hitler's Germany. But as time passed he had become more and more confused. It had turned out that the main mistake Hitler made was not to win the war. In retrospect, victory did not seem to have been as unattainable, and thoughts of it not as insane, as in the actual days of the collapse. After all, the atomic bomb was first thought of in Germany. With a little more luck, she could have developed it in time to win the war. Hence Germany did not lose because democracy was better than totalitarianism—or because it was impossible for one nation to rule over all the others. That this was no chimera was shown by the fact that the Soviets now controlled almost half the world. Hitler could have saved the world from Communism, and had it really been so smart of the West to support the Russians?

He really would not know how to decide which was more useful, democracy or totalitarianism. Freedom? Well, it was a beautiful

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word, but it seemed as though freedom was not faring so well under democracy either. As it looked from where he was sitting, freedom in America, too, was limited to those who supported the regime. Wasn't the question of democracy and totalitarianism to a great degree a matter of words? He understood that as a Jew I could not be completely open-minded about the question. And incidentally, many of his comrades felt that one of Hitler's biggest mistakes had been to attack both *Knoblauch* and *Weihrauch*—garlic and incense—meaning the Jews and the Catholic Church. But this was not a question of ethics—just of tactics. And leaving the Jewish question aside, wasn't democracy just a word that could be invoked with the same elasticity as God?

"Please don't misunderstand me," he finished. "I don't presume that I know the answers. I admit being confused. Things seemed so simple the day after the collapse. They have become confusing recently. If democracy is really so superior, look at what it is doing to France. If Germanic racial superiority was really such a myth, look at the amazing recovery of Germany." Was the question of right or wrong really so decisive in international politics, or was it the question of weak or strong? Was it really such a silly ambition to be the strongest country in the world? Was the United States doing so badly in that role? It was certainly not much fun being an Austrian. It had been more fun making history than teaching it. But these were things that had only come to his mind just now, because, frankly, without my questioning, it would not have occurred to him to think about them. He certainly did not know all the answers. Did I?

I NOTICED one essential difference between Austrian and German behavior. Up to 70 per cent of the tourists in Europe who come from inside Europe itself are Germans, and I came across many of them in hotels, restaurants, etc. Most German tourists, whether or not they recognized me as Jewish, felt some need to apologize for the way the Nazis had treated the Jews. The Austrians did not. After all the worst Nazi crimes in Austria had been committed after the *Anschluss*, and by the Third Reich, not by Austria. The fact that tens of thousands of Austrians had been enthusiastic minions of Hitler, and thousands of others had directly benefited from the confiscation of Jewish property had been quickly forgotten. And after all, what did happen to the Jews of Austria? Sixty thousand of them had been deported and killed. So what? War was war. Four hundred thousand Austrians had died and nobody was making any fuss about them. The Jews who managed to flee did not escape Hitler and persecution alone; they had also escaped the war. They were now living abroad and could even afford to travel thousands of miles in order to revisit their old country.

A woman teacher I gave a lift to, and whom, because she seemed intelligent, I told I was an ex-Austrian Jew, asked me when I had left. I said, "In September 1938." With genuine admiration, she exclaimed, "How clever!" She did not associate my departure from Austria with my fate as a Jew under the Nazis. She failed to grasp the fact that I had not just moved to another country, but had emigrated in order to escape concentration camps, deportation, death. It was just cleverness, Jewish cleverness perhaps, that had made me leave while she had stayed behind and got stuck in a war.

I got an even clearer view of what went on in the mind of the Austrian "Aryan" when I visited my father's old store. A neighbor had taken it over, thereby enlarging his own store. "Oh yes," said the owner's wife, "we remember your father." Then she grew a bit apprehensive about what my visit might mean. When it turned out that it was just a sentimental one, she was visibly relieved and told me about how she and her family had suffered during the war. They had been bombed. Then, apparently, following a sudden impulse, she added, "Isn't it funny? We who stayed behind were bombed, and those who left want restitution now!"

THE Austrian government's cheap game with Jewish demands for restitution (about which COMMENTARY readers learned from Hal Lehrman's "Austria and the Jews" in the October 1954 issue) is a tricky and cynical one, but it cannot be called undemocratic—if democracy means expressing the will of the majority. I do not know to what extent the decision to pay reparations to Israel was supported by popular feeling in Germany. But I have no doubt that some such feeling existed somewhere in Germany.

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It is altogether absent in Austria. Adenauer's step was certainly prompted in part by political expediency, but it also had a great deal of honest moral conviction behind it. Not the slightest bit of shame tinctures the shabby dodges with which the Austrian government has met Jewish demands for a settlement like the German one.

The Committee for Jewish Claims on Austria had asked for a token sum of twelve million dollars. (Existing Jewish unclaimed and heirless property alone in Austria is estimated to amount to two hundred million dollars.) But even this was refused by the Austrian government, which for a while offered such sophistical pretexts as its unwillingness to make religious or racial distinctions, or its "technical" inability to settle any claims until six months after the signing of a peace treaty. Yet the same government drew up an elaborate plan for compensating former Austrian Nazis who had suffered under de-Nazification, and it took the joint veto of the Allied Control Council to prevent this impudent plan from going into effect.*

The Austrian government would never have agreed to negotiations in the first place had not Germany established an example. For a while it tried to follow this example, on the assumption that what was good for Germany might be good for Austria too. But the Raab regime's negotiations with the Committee for Jewish Claims on Austria broke down early last year, shortly after the State Department temporarily suspended American aid to Israel. It was as if the Austrians had suddenly discovered that the Jews were not so powerful, after all, in the United States.

The American Jewish Congress charged during Chancellor Julius Raab's trip to this country that the "insultingly casual treatment" of the Committee for Jewish Claims on Austria was prompted by certain secret clauses in an agreement between his People's party and the neo-Nazi League of Independents to use heirless property to compensate ex-Nazis.†

Yet the Austrian Social Democrats have no better record on this issue than the other two parties. Their action has only served to complicate matters and make it easier for the Raab government to stall. The Social Democrats have made their support for Jewish claims dependent upon the satisfaction of demands for compensation by Social Democrats who suffered under the Dolfuss-Schuschnigg regime. This would mean putting the Dolfuss-Schuschnigg regime on the same footing as the Hitler one—a tough proposition for Raab, who once belonged to the Dolfuss-Schuschnigg group. Social Democratic leaders, when pressed by socialists from other countries for a more positive stand, have countered that they would only

*According to Mr. Kurt Grossman of the Jewish Agency: "The U.S. Department of State stated in a press release in 1952 with reference to this projected legislation that it 'was greatly disturbed to have received reports on the above legislation when restitution and general-claims problems of Nazism still have not been resolved by the Austrian Government.' In the same year, U.S. High Commissioner Walter J. Donnelly stated that he was 'disappointed to find legislation for the relief of ex-Nazis preceding that for their victims.' In explaining his veto two years later, the British High Commissioner said, 'It is under these circumstances—before certain victims of the Nazi oppression have had their wrongs set right—that we are requested to give approval to these two laws before us which are designed to relieve former Nazis who had participated in that oppression from the legal penalties imposed upon them by Austrian legislation, promulgated with the unanimous approval of this Council.' Dr. Herbert A. Kraus, a parliamentarian of the neo-Nazi League of Independents, advised Chancellor Raab 'simply' to ignore the veto. This advice was followed implicitly when Raab announced a month later that the former Nazis would receive 'advance payments' from the Austrian government against the day when such legislation was ultimately passed."

†Raab, during his visit to the United States, made some angry statements about what he called "well-organized questioning on the topic of Jewish restitution demands by journalists." From a man of his background and mentality, such a remark hinted at Jewish domination of the American press. He also said, in the untranslated part of another interview, that Jews were "good businessmen" about whom nobody had to worry. In order to make some answer to the barrage of reporters' questions, he asserted that Austria would settle Jewish restitution demands on its own terms, regardless of pressure from abroad. Nevertheless, the reaction of American Jewry to Raab's visit (there was a Jewish boycott of the receptions in his honor) has made the Austrian press and government a little pensive. The just signed treaty reestablishing Austria's sovereignty seems to have further softened the government's position on restitution, but actual claims settlement has not yet begun, and there's no way of telling whether this time the government will indeed implement its latest sentiment in practical fashion.

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play into the Raab government's hand by supporting Jewish claims; he would then get all the neo-Nazi votes. Raab's final offer of a little more than a million dollars in satisfaction of Jewish claims was, as we now can see, an expression of Austria's collective immorality, not merely his own party's.

As I drove south from Vienna toward Italy, the scenery was of singular loveliness. The Semmering, the mountains of Styria, and the lakes of Carinthia evoked boyhood memories of camping and hiking. The return to my past had brought no new revelations. Things had turned out much as I had expected—or had I approached them with too many preconceived notions? Was it possible for any one with so many old memories of it to visit this country with an open mind?

Could there be such a thing as charming people who just happened to dislike Jews? I tried to be fair. This country had had a tragic history. It had lost two wars, was impoverished, and had been so ever since I could remember. Life was hard. And the Austrian temperament was different from the German. The Germans were go-getters, the Austrians were *Raunzer* who liked to complain and criticize, and would prefer letting things go on the same way than be deprived of the chance to complain. They had not been the masters of their own destiny for many a year. They were little men who struggled hard for a little security. An old saying came to my mind: Austrian civil servants didn't earn anything, but they were sure to earn it. And Austrians loved to be civil servants. I remembered the remark of my first Austrian hitchhiker: "We Austrians don't hate anybody any more. We just envy." I saw this as the new motto on the Austrian flag: "We don't hate. We envy."

It seemed to me that most Austrians were neither good nor bad, but simply weak. Their political opportunism, their partly simulated, partly temporary, partly genuine enthusiasm for the *Anschluss,* their cruelty towards Jews when such cruelty was legal, their exaggerated politeness—all these seemed to me to be rooted in fundamental weakness of character.

That the Jews who had managed to escape and survive should now appear to the Austrians to be the real winners was understandable. Austria has all the charm of the Old World but it is Old World with all its limited horizons and restricted possibilities. Most of the people now living in Austria are, in spite of the beauty surrounding them, frustrated and plaintive. The pariahs of yesterday, on the other hand, had not only gone elsewhere but they had also gone ahead, fulfilling the prophecy that the meek shall inherit the earth. Jewish refugees from Austria might, depending on their age, feel nostalgic from time to time, and they might say, "Happy we are, but *glücklich* we are not," but on the whole they are doing much better than the "Aryans" still in Austria. Many refugees have reached comfortable positions. Their children are growing up in an atmosphere less poisoned by anti-Semitism than theirs was. Most of them live in places less precarious than next door to the Iron Curtain.

But even if this could be said of all Jewish refugees from Austria, and even if there were not—as there are—thousands of elderly, impoverished ex-Austrian Jews who have nothing but their restitution claims, Austria's attitude until recently would still be proof of her moral bankruptcy. What is asked of the Austrian government is not charity but actually, in view of the amount involved, only a token payment, ridiculously small for a country enjoying an unprecedented boom, thanks to foreign aid. The new sovereign Austria has a chance now to turn over a new leaf in its relations with Jews. Should Austria continue her present attitude the response can only be contempt, and the tourist who has no special stake in Austria might ask himself whether seeing Austria was worth the price of coming into contact with Austrians.

As I crossed the Italian border at Tarvisio, I felt that whatever sentimental accounts I had left with my old home had all been settled now, and that not even curiosity remained. It was raining, and lightning flashed across the gray sky as I drove towards the Dolomites. It was unusually dark for the early afternoon, but I knew that beyond lay the sunshine and warmth of Italy.

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THE BRITISH ELECTIONS HERALD A NEW ERA

The Break in Working-Class Solidarity

NORMAN MACRAE

"I'M NOT going to vote at this election," said the taxi driver who picked up Lord Woolton, the Conservative party leader, last month in a grimy northern town. "I've got nothing to grumble about." It is possible that he was merely being polite to his distinguished passenger. But it is also possible—indeed, now that the results are out, it is probable—that he was giving Lord Woolton his first real assurance of Conservative victory in the country at large. The question that every political analyst in Britain is asking today is whether that taxi driver was also sounding the first faint rumble of a sea-change in British political history.

The statistics of the election have already been carried in almost every newspaper in the world but the barest of them are well worth repetition. The number of people who were entitled to vote at this election was almost exactly the same as in the election of 1951: just under 35 million in each case. Since 1951, of course, about two million electors had died, and another two million young people had risen above the minimum voting age of twenty-one to take their place. But this normal shift at either end of the voting cavalcade did not carry with it any significant change in the class structure of the electorate; indeed, for reasons that will be discussed later, it should have been of a slight net advantage to Labor. The real difference between the two elections lies in the fact that in 1951 more than 28.5 million people, or 82.6 per cent of those entitled to vote, came to the polls; in 1955 only just over 26.5 million people, or 76.8 per cent, bothered to do so. By the standards of most democracies this is still a fairly good turnout, but by recent British standards it is a poor one. Nearly two million people who had voted in 1951 this time stayed away.

Of these two million, some 400,000 were people who voted Conservative last time, or who might have been expected to do so in 1955; the Tory vote dropped from 13.7 million in 1951 to 13.3 million this time. After even a cursory examination of the figures for different areas, this drop is fairly easy to explain. A sizable part of the drop occurred in agricultural areas; farmers everywhere are less enthusiastic about any government that has been in power since the great postwar food shortage and agricultural inflation were assuaged. There is also an irremediable malcontents' vote in Britain which always tends to go against the government of the day. It went against the Tories in 1945, and against Labor in 1951; this time it did not go against the Tories again, but it did stay at home. In addition, more of the well-to-do take their holidays early, and will have been away from home for a May election, and there was a fairly sharp drop in Tory votes in some residential areas where everybody knew that the Conservatives "were going to get in anyway, so that it hardly seemed worth voting."

ONE of the reasons the Labor party victory in the British election of 1945 was regarded as historic was the fact that this victory was expected to usher in a long-term period of Labor dominance—the working class, with the advance of popular democracy, had at last come into its own and could be expected to remain there. But, writes Norman Macrae, last May's Conservative triumph in the general elections throws all this into question again—analysis of the vote may indeed indicate that the Labor tide is on a long-term ebb. Mr. Macrae, who was born in 1923 in Königsberg, East Prussia (his father was British vice-consul then), is assistant editor of the London *Economist*. He was an RAF navigator during the war serving in the Far East.

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In my own home suburb of Wimbledon, where 42,000 Tories went to the polls last time to give the sitting member one of the biggest Conservative majorities in the country, only 22,000 turned out this time (admittedly, from a smaller electorate): but although a lot of stockbrokers obviously stayed in town for the festivities of election night instead of hurrying home to record their votes, our local Tory member was still returned with a rock-solid, though reduced majority. The Conservatives have some reason to be disappointed with this relative apathy among their supporters after a period of government in which they have done much better than most fair-minded people had expected—better, indeed, than they themselves had originally dreamed. But they can take comfort from the thought that the drop in their vote, having regard to the stability of the electorate, was the smallest that has ever occurred after a period of Conservative government. By any reasonable historical standard they have kept up their vote remarkably well.

But the level of Labor abstentions was a very different matter. For one thing, it was much bigger. While 400,000 Tories stayed away, one and a half million Labor voters abstained. Labor's vote dropped from over 13.9 million in 1951 to 12.4 million this time. For another, there is—or ought to be—a long-term tendency for the Labor vote to rise. Until last month it had risen at every election since 1918, with the sole exception of 1931 when Labor's own leader, Ramsay MacDonald, had thrown in the towel before mounting economic crisis and himself gone over to the Tories' side. For yet another, Labor, being in opposition, cannot take much comfort from the thought that part of its drop, like that of the Tories, was explained by the feeling that it is "not worth voting" in safe seats. Admittedly, the feelings of the stockbrokers in Wimbledon were echoed among the miners of the Rhondda, where 12,000 stayed away; but it is part of the tradition of British politics that apathy settles more easily upon government supporters than upon opposition supporters, who are supposed to be bubbling with energy on polling day in the desire to "throw the rascals out."

Finally, and most significant of all, there were some Labor seats—notably in the engineering area around Birmingham—where the Labor vote did not merely go down, but where the Tory vote went up. In these Midland towns, in some of which production and real earnings have increased by 30 or 40 per cent since 1951, some of the workers quite clearly carried their feeling that they had "nothing to grumble about" to un-British extremes; they went and voted Tory, probably for the first time in their lives. Where they went this time, is there any danger that the one and a half million others with "nothing to grumble about" may go next time? If there is, what can Labor do about it? These are the questions ruining every Labor politician's sleep at the present time, and they may well lead to dramatic eruptions in the course of this Parliament.

To the outsider, all this must seem a rather exaggerated fuss to make about such a small turnover in votes. But this is because, from outside, Britain's choice of a Labor government between 1945 and 1951 probably looked like a strange aberration. From inside, it looked like a natural development, and one that was probably going to be much more durable than anti-socialists abroad believed. The sensible supposition to make in 1945 was that Britain was going to have many more Labor governments than Tory governments during the second half of the 20th century. Moreover, this supposition still held good just after the election of 1951. It is important to understand why.

The reason for Labor's optimism, even after 1951, was that the Labor vote still showed a long-term tendency to rise. In its great victory of 1945 the party had won 391 Parliamentary seats from 12.1 million votes, but in its narrow defeat of 1951 it won only 294 seats from 13.9 million votes. In both years, exactly 48.8 per cent of those who voted came down on its side. Labor's transition from victory to defeat between 1945 and

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1951 was not due to any decline in its support. It was due, first, to the fact that 8.3 per cent of the electorate deserted Liberal or anti-socialist "independent" candidates between 1945 and 1951, and that exactly this proportion was added on to the Tory vote; and, secondly, to certain changes in constituency boundaries. The 1945 election, which was fought along pre-war constituency boundaries, brought gross under-representation to the dormitory suburbs which had filled up with Tory voters in the late 1930's, but which still returned only the same number of MP's as in the days before the efflux to suburbia began. Boundary changes in 1948 and 1954 have put that injustice right, and have indeed introduced a slight distortion in the Tories' favor. But this re-alignment of Liberal votes and this re-arrangement of boundaries were once-for-all factors in the Tories' favor. Once they were effected, it seemed, the long-term tendency for the Labor vote to grow would again become the dominant factor of British politics—although from a lower jumping-off point of Parliamentary advantage than the peak conditions of 1945 had given to the party.

The lesson of the election of 1955 is that there may not, after all, be a long-term tendency for the Labor vote to grow. With increasing incomes we may, conceivably, be moving over to a less obviously "class-constructed" framework of politics. And nobody will understand the buzz that this election has caused among British political thinkers until he realizes that this would be a change-over that could set the whole course of European history on to a new tack. It may be worthwhile here to discourse at some length upon why, up to last month, it had seemed reasonable to suppose that the advantages Labor ought to have in any British election were built into our social and political system.

BRITAIN has an electorate of some 35 million, and of these between 20 and 25 million belong—under any definition of the term—to the "working class." This, of course, is not an unusual proportion for an industrial country; broadly, the same picture obtains in America and in industrial Western Europe. But compared with America the British have the great disadvantage that their "proletariat" thinks of itself as a proletariat, and as people whose children will remain in the same class. You can blame this if you like upon British snobbery, including the inverted snobbery of the East End of London, where it is rather improper to put an aspidistra in your window and suggest that you are more uppity than the Joneses. You can also blame it on our educational system. But neither apportionment of the blame is strictly fair.

Britain's real disadvantages compared with America are that we have not got the enormous dynamic of an immigrant economy, where Bill Jones does not feel something of a traitor to his class if he rises to a position above Bert Jones—because with you neither of them is called Jones, but Greenbaum or Jorgenssen or Kowalski. We have also lived for a much longer time than you in an economy where small-scale enterprise is very limited, where there is no tradition of the "small-town business makes good" (because we have not got any small towns in the American sense), and where only 5 per cent of our population is in agriculture so that we have not got many of that useful class cross-breed, "the boy from the farm." "Never forget, gentlemen," Keynes used to tell his students in his naughtier moments, "that America is fundamentally a peasant economy." Combine this with the fact that our universities, when crammed to the roof, can only take between 3 and 4 per cent of those of university age and are not yet sufficiently democratized, and you will grasp our great social and political disadvantage. For a long time we have had, and for a long time to come it had seemed that we were bound to have, a large and homogeneous body of our population which thinks of itself as purely working class. And do not be scornful of us about this, for the same inevitability had appeared to lie over the whole of Western Europe.

Compared with Western Europe, however, we have one great political difference. In

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Western Europe the working class vote is usually split in three. There are the Communists, who are particularly powerful in France and Italy; there are the socialists, who are fundamentally anti-clerical; and there are the Roman Catholics, to whom the anti-clericalism of the socialists is anathema. The dominant feature of the British Labor party is that it is a flexible party whose highest aim is to attract all the working class people who would divide under these three heads in France and Italy, plus a few other people as well.

IN THE first place, Labor undoubtedly captures some of the people who would vote Communist in some other countries. One always has to tell Americans that they need not worry much about this, and to tell the British Labor party that it ought to worry about it a great deal more. The reason why Americans should not worry about it is that political Communism in Britain is an electoral joke; the average poll of the seventeen Communists who stood as Communists at the election last month was not much larger than that of the enterprising gentleman who stood in a Lake District constituency on the platform of home rule for the county of Cumberland and the legalization of cock-fighting. The reason why Labor should worry more about Communism, however, is that the sort of people who would vote Communist in France and Italy are the intense sort who bother to turn up at dull local Labor party meetings even when there are no elections in the offing. They thus, by sheer persistence and by the natural convention that chaps who turn up and do the work deserve to become organizing secretaries and the like, tend to fill many of the most important "amateur" posts in the local Labor parties; and they exert an undue influence on the choice of the local parties' candidates at election time. It is for this reason that about a quarter of Labor candidates are usually supporters of Aneurin Bevan, even though it is a reasonable guess (supported by public opinion polls) that a much smaller proportion of those who vote for the party at elections are Bevanite-inclined. Of the 277 Labor MP's elected last month, in fact, about 60 are likely to prove to be supporters of Mr. Bevan; and about three are likely to be very red and very anti-American indeed. But once again, outsiders should not worry. It is surprising how the queerest customers tone down when they get near to Westminster and power. This applies, in especial degree, to that queerest customer of all—Aneurin Bevan himself.

To the second group of working class voters—those who would call themselves socialists on the continent—Labor's appeal is effective but muted. Officially the Labor party is a socialist party, and it calls itself that at appropriate moments in its private enclaves, but in the outside world the only people who always give it that name are writers in the Conservative press. Indeed, when the words "Socialist Party" cropped up in a quasi-judicial report on land usage, Herbert Morrison exploded indignantly in the House of Commons that this supposedly impartial lawyer had unwittingly "revealed by these words what sort of newspapers he reads." It is a great feat of flexibility for Labor to adopt the word "socialist" when it is advantageous, and to pretend that it is a press baron's term of abuse upon the party when it is disadvantageous. But anybody who thinks that it is a feat which might repel its supporters just does not understand the political solidarity of the British working class.

The third division of the working class vote in Europe hardly exists with us at all. Religion in politics is not a principal issue and, insofar as it is even a side issue, Labor is ready to come up wagging its tail and prepared to make concessions to special religious or moralist interests to bring in their votes. For example, Labor nearly always arranges to have its proper quota of temperance MP's (the chief of them was unexpectedly beaten on May 26), anti-vaccination MP's, and pacifists—all in a party which is boisterous, progressive, and reputedly militant. It can do this because it has hitherto felt pretty certain that, once it got its candidate past the local

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party's (possibly Bevanite) selection group, then the quirks of the candidate did not matter nearly so much as the party label among the party's solid working class vote. "Our chaps will vote for a pig if we choose to put one up," one party official is reputed to have said at the time of the 1951 election. On the other side of the fence, the Conservatives have never been able to feel quite so certain about this. If they did adopt anything that any local anti-socialists regarded as workable, then they would have an uncomfortable feeling that an "Independent Anti-Pig Conservative" candidate would probably be put up against him and split the middle-class vote. (Very much this sort of thing in fact did split the Tory vote, and lose a seat to Labor in one Scottish constituency last month.) The result is that the local Tory candidate nowadays tends to be terribly conformist to middle-class "good taste"—preferably Anglican, center-of-the-road, able war record, not too outspoken—unless, of course, he happens to be a relative or a relative-in-law of a present or past Tory prime minister. This insistence on conformity is rather a bore, and if one belongs to a minority group I suppose one should get very angry about it. But it does have one advantage: it is no longer considered conformist to be very Blimpish and right wing. For this reason, the feeling that a more powerful Tory party might become again the party of "pelf and privilege" is really arrant nonsense. It will become steadily more "welfare state" instead.

This digression on the type of candidates put up by each party has been worthwhile, because it emphasizes the crucial point that people at whom the Labor party tries to beam its appeal are not mainly doctrinaire socialists or anything so intellectual-sounding. Instead, its aim is to persuade all sorts of ordinary and extraordinary people, and especially the 70 per cent of the electorate which regards itself as working class, that it is the party "which one would normally expect to represent people like themselves." Only in Scandinavia, and particularly in Sweden, has a working class party managed to run up a similar monopoly of being "against the boss." And in Sweden the Social Democrat party has now formed the King's government for many years.

WHO are the one and a half million former Labor voters who refused on this occasion to respond to such an appeal? One can perhaps get nearest an answer to this question by trying to trace the sort of working people who have never voted Labor at all, and who have thus prevented it from getting the clear majority it might well have expected years ago. They seem to be split into three groups. First, there are those who, while regarding the Tories as the bosses' party, have a suspicion that the bosses are probably more efficient at managing affairs. This feeling, of course, was especially prevalent in the Tory landslide of 1931, after Ramsay Macdonald had deserted Labor because he felt that the party could not handle the economic crisis on its own. Secondly, there are always some workers who know quite well that they are doing better than others and are afraid that Labor's egalitarianism might hurt them as well as the boss. Thirdly, there are some elder workers who still regard Labor as slightly unrespectable; after all, only the Liberals and the Tories were respectable up to 1918.

This last group is gradually dying out. It was largely because of their gradual decline—and because more and more of the working classes were fulfilling their democratic right of coming to the polls—that the Labor vote rose so consistently (apart from 1931) between 1918 and 1951. The drop in the Labor vote in 1955 must mean that there has been a sudden swelling of the first and second groups. It is in the feeling that Labor is not so efficient as the Tories, that it might "take prosperity away" from higher earning workers, and perhaps—just a shadow of perhaps—that Bevanism is making Labor not quite respectable again, that one can almost certainly find the principal explanation of those fatal one and a half million Labor abstentions in this election.

This reading is, I think, borne out by analysis of the places where the swing to the

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Tories was most marked in this election. The swing in the prosperous engineering constituencies of the Midlands has already been referred to: this was the "don't let them take it away" vote. A second feature was the reaction of Labor voters to Bevanite candidates. Constituencies that had had Bevanite candidates as sitting members at previous elections voted in very much the same way as the national average (apart from a rather surprising drop in the Labor turn-out in Bevan's own constituency of Ebbw Vale). But wherever a left-wing local Labor party had introduced a Bevanite candidate to a constituency which had had a right-wing Labor candidate before, the drop in the Labor vote, and the increase in the indignant Conservative vote, was marked. This, quite clearly, was the "unrespectability" bogey rearing its head before the Labor party again; intriguingly, it also seems to have affected constituencies where not quite Bevanite candidates deviated from the supposedly bipartisan line of supporting manufacture of the hydrogen bomb. A third feature of the election—which deserves a separate sentence on its own—was the dramatic vote in the Yorkshire constituency of Cleveland. This area is dominated by workers employed by Imperial Chemical Industries, which Labor had promised to nationalize; it showed the largest statistical swing to the Conservatives of any seat in the country.

These individual results, even more than the general trend, must compel the Labor party to search their souls. It has been clear for a long time that the majority of the British people does not really believe in—although it also does not doctrinally recoil from—the nationalization of all the means of production, distribution, and exchange. The Labor party does not believe in it either, but it has hitherto felt assured that it would not harm itself by pretending on occasion that it did. After May 26, that assumption does not look as firm as it did.

THIS, then, is the political situation which Britain has inherited from its recent election. The lesson that the Conservatives will draw from it is quite clear. They will continue with the policies that they followed in 1951-55. At home, this is an expansionist policy which keeps rigidly in step with the trade unions, full employment, the welfare state, and all the other things which the mass of British voters—and especially working class voters—hold dear. It is a policy which the Conservatives originally inherited from Labor, but in which the Butlerites now implicitly believe; ever since it has been shown that monetary policy can keep a check upon fluctuating industrial inventories, and thereby upon the balance of payments problem of a country whose imports so largely consist of raw materials, it is a policy in which most of the rest of us have believed also. Abroad, the Tory recipe will be a mixture of the policy of peace through strength, in which both Sir Anthony Eden and Harold Macmillan believe, and of the policy of talking with the Russians at every opportunity on which the British public insists. This may have its dangers, but one has the suspicion from here that if the Russians really are going to offer a partial withdrawal from Eastern Europe in return for a withdrawal of foreign (which principally means American) troops from Germany—then the dangers of rash peace-mongering within the Western Alliance are not going to rest entirely on this side of the Atlantic. But any attempt to examine olive branches before they are offered would lead far beyond the proper confines of this article. The only thing that needs to be said on Tory foreign policy is that, although the voice may be the voice of Macmillan, Sir Anthony himself will be at the helm.

THE implications of the election results for the Labor party are far more interesting. There have been three reactions as yet, all of which should be studied in the light of the fearful—if still faint—forebodings for Labor which have been described in this article. The first came from Attlee, who is seventy-two years of age and will almost certainly retire before the next election. "The tide may have ebbed for the time being," he declared in his first post-election speech, "but

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it will come again in full flood." Attlee's theme is that if economic or other misfortune overtakes a Conservative government, then the pendulum will soon swing back to labor; and, if that misfortune did come, then there is no doubt that he would be right. By contrast, Gaitskell, whom most people expect to be the leader of the Labor party by the time the next election comes round, has given a recipe almost precisely the opposite of Attlee's. He has told a post-election audience of right-wing trade unionists that there is no point in having a party that can only win elections when things go wrong for the country; an administration that could only take power at moments of disaster is not his idea of fun. He is, therefore, in favor of a reform of Labor's policy, to fit in with what he believes is the new mood of the country.

The third reaction that deserves quotation comes from an article in the *New Statesman and Nation,* which—although unsigned—was almost certainly written by a Bevanite politician. The *New Statesman* argues that the "Forward with Labor" manifesto on which "the election should have been, but was not, fought" represented an agreed policy between the left and right wings of the party. It should therefore be clutched to the party's breast "as the strategic framework within which the tactics of the Parliamentary battle can be worked out." In other words, this voice from the left insists that such measures of nationalization as the party theoretically accepted in that manifesto must be maintained as party policy, but that the left need not press any new demands at this juncture.

For what it is worth, therefore, in the immediate aftermath of defeat, the left in the Labor party seems to be on the defensive, the old leader of the party seems eager to stand still, and the man whom most people expect to be the old leader's heir clearly wants to do some rightward re-thinking. One suspects that the outcome of this clash of forces will depend on the sort of economic weather that awaits the Conservatives, and on the trend shown in by-elections at the time when Attlee retires; it will also depend upon the battle of personalities as that retirement approaches. For the man who is still determined to challenge Gaitskell for the leadership remains inscrutable and implacable. Bevan has so far given one principal explanation of the drop in the Labor vote in his constituency: it was due, he is reported to have said, to a small but badly timed shower of rain. It would be too bad for the journalist, at the end of such a long article as this, if this mere matter of meteorology was the whole explanation of the mystery of May 26—if the course of history was swayed last month merely because capitalist Conservatives carry umbrellas while downtrodden Labor voters cannot afford them. But, somehow, I do not think it was.

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A GROUP OF VERSE

CHARLES REZNIKOFF

I

OF COURSE, we must die.
How else will the world be rid of
the old telephone numbers
we cannot forget?

The numbers
it would be foolish—
utterly useless—
to call.

II

I REMEMBER very well when I asked you—
as if you were a friend—whether or not
I should go somewhere or other,
you answered: "It does not matter:
you are not at all important."

That was true. But I wonder
whom you thought important.
He who has been in his grave
these ten years and more?
He is not important now.
Or he who is wearing out a path
in the carpet of his room
as he paces it
like a shabby coyote in a cage,
an old man, hopelessly mad?

Yourself, no doubt:
looking like one
who has been a great beauty.

III

THESE days when I dare not spend freely
and the friends I meet are uneasy
that I might ask for a loan, I dreamt of you:
my friend at school.
I was going to ask you a question
and afraid you might find it foolish
(you were somewhat older and sensible).
The faces about you were shadowed
but yours was smiling, fresh and pink.
And I must be in my dotage
for I find myself weeping that you are dead—
who have been dead for a long time.

IV

Sightseeing Tour: New York

1

THE sky is a peculiar blue with small clouds,
numerous and white: not the luminous blue
seen in paintings but a cheap opaque blue,
once painted in the vestibules of tenements
with the same small clouds;
yet here it is—
real sky, real clouds.

A young woman dressed in white
is seated on a bench in the park, eating an apple
and reading a magazine: the apple is a summer pippin,
green outside;
but the inside is brown and decayed,
and she eats it with small, dainty bites.

2

The barber shop has curtains
but it must have been a long time since they were washed
for they are a dark gray
and falling apart;
the window itself is dirty
and whatever signs it has are gray with dust.
The barber stands in the doorway
wearing a coat of uncertain white
over dirty trousers—
and he needs a shave badly.
The shop is called in bold letters
"Sanitary Barber Shop,"
and there are those, I suppose, who believe it.

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V

FRASER, I think, tells of a Roman
who loved a tree in his garden so much
he would kiss and embrace it.

This is going pretty far
even for a lover of nature
and I do not think it would be allowed
in Central Park.

VI

Notes on the Jewish Holidays

Purim

THE Jewess, Hadassah, takes the name of
the moon-goddess, Esther;
her kinsman, Mordecai, whatever his He-
brew name,
has the name of the Babylonian god.
If you have intelligence and beauty, Esther,
"tell no one of your people or your kindred,"
and you will live in the king's palace and be
a queen.

"We are sold, I and my people, to be de-
stroyed, to be slain, and to perish!"

The hands, heavy with rings, are Esther's
but the voice is the voice of Hadassah.

Passover

"BEGIN with the disgrace and end with
the glory," the rabbis say.
The disgrace was not in being a slave—that
may happen to anyone—
but to remain such.
What was the glory?
To choose the Lord:
that is, the bread of affliction and freedom.

Chanukah

IN A world where each man must be of use
and each thing useful, the rebellious Jews
light not one light but eight—
not to see by but to look at.

VII

"O LORD, be with us!"
At my pious ejaculation
all the pigeons flew away
in terror.
Truly, our God is not like Aphrodite
"with her doves about her"
but the God of battles.

HERE we present CHARLES REZNIKOFF again as poet. Our readers know him also as literary critic, chronicler of Jewish history, writer of short stories—the variety of his contributions having graced the pages of our magazine since its inception. Mr. Reznikoff, who is a New Yorker, has to his credit some ten published volumes of poetry, fiction, and history.

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THE LIBRARIES IN A TIME OF TENSION

The Legion and Its Demands

JAMES RORTY

MANY of the American libraries that were harassed by the patriotic societies and local champions of 100-per-cent Americanism on the score of the "Communist propaganda" on their shelves did in fact, for various reasons, possess a considerable accumulation of books by Communist and pro-Communist authors, as we have seen in my article of last month ("The Attack on Our Libraries"). But did this mean the library profession had been subverted by Communist infiltration and propaganda? Scarcely.* Compared to its success on other "sectors" of the "cultural front," the party had rather little luck in recruiting members or fellow-travelers among librarians. In 1939 a Progressive Librarians Council was organized which for a time issued a quarterly bulletin full of rather muddled liberalism. But the publication soon folded, and the other activities of the Council were of little consequence. Its peak membership was less than two hundred and nothing has been heard of it since 1943.

It is reasonable to suppose that, like other professions, the librarians have included a few Communists and a larger number of sympathizers and fellow-travelers; it is even more probable that many librarians tended to share the illusions about Soviet Russia that prevailed during the 30's and, again, during the wartime Grand Alliance. It is significant, however, that in challenging the book-selection policies of American libraries, the patriotic societies have rarely made public charges of Communist affiliation or sympathy against the librarians involved, and that to date no librarian has been shown to be trying to foist Communist propaganda upon his or her patrons. During the postwar decade, a half dozen librarians have taken refuge in the Fifth Amendment when questioned by Congressional Committees, but these cases have not involved the professional activities of the librarians in book selection, nor has this issue been raised in connection with the dismissal of a few librarians for "bad associations."

MUCH of the pressure on public libraries and school libraries has stemmed from the National Americanism Commission of the American Legion. The Commission pub-

LAST month JAMES RORTY narrated the ordeal of the American public library which, during the past few years, has been attacked and harassed by local cultural vigilantes in many communities, and described how community leadership was on the whole successful in safeguarding the freedom to read. Here he considers the demands made upon libraries in a time of tension, and in particular the demand of many patriotic societies for a more rigid control and identification of library books on anything to do with the Communist problem. Mr. Rorty is a veteran journalist and frequent contributor to this magazine. He is preparing a book on censorship efforts in the United States.

*Granville Hicks has provided an informed and realistic explanation of this relatively large number of pro-Communist books in "How Red Was the Red Decade?" (*Harper's Magazine*, July 1953). "I suppose that during the thirties," writes Mr. Hicks, "almost every publishing house in the country had at least one Communist or Communist sympathizer on his staff. In many instances the political views of these men were known to their colleagues and superiors; in others they were suspected; in others they were more or less successfully kept secret. It is also true that many books sympathetic to Communism were published in these years, and frequently, I am sure, it was a Communist editor who brought in a Communist book. It is fatuous, however, to conclude that these books were always, or even as a general rule 'put over' by these authors. What some people are able to forget is that there was a market for left-wing books during the thirties. . . ."

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lishes a bi-weekly bulletin entitled the *Firing Line,* which devotes itself to exposing Communist subversion and propaganda, and to stimulating and coordinating the anti-Communist activities of local Legion commanders, Americanism committees, and Legion auxiliaries. *Firing Line* has never advocated book-burning, nor has it ever published a comprehensive official Legion list of subversive books. Its position, as stated in its January 15, 1953 issue, is that "with some 18,000 or more books published every year, National obviously cannot undertake mass book reviewing. We do try to review and recommend sound and constructive books on Soviet Russia, subversion and espionage in the United States, and related subjects." In general, *Firing Line's* positive recommendations have tended to be informed and discriminating. Among the recommended books have been *Brain Washing in Red China* by Edward Hunter, *No Secret Is Safe* by Father Mark Tenien, *Tell the West* by Jerzy Gliksman, and *Conquest by Terror* by Leland Stowe.

Firing Line has also called attention to the hearings and reports of Congressional committees investigating subversion with the result that Legion posts and state departments have frequently urged their local libraries to purchase these documents or accept them as gifts. The Legion Department of Florida, for example, presented a set of the McCarran Committee's hearings and reports on the Institute of Pacific Relations to every university and college library in the entire state.

ALTHOUGH the National Americanism Commission does not publish an official blacklist of books it considers subversive, it does alert its subscribers, some of whom are librarians, to the Communist propaganda that is occasionally mailed free to American libraries, one example of which is the 56-page magazine *China Reconstructs,* printed in Peking and mailed out of Hong Kong. *Firing Line* also publishes occasional lists and critical reviews of books it considers "anti-anti-Communist" or otherwise inimical to the Legion's campaign against Communist subversion. Here it tends to lump together indiscriminately books of widely differing merit and tendency. Among the books that have been so listed are *Civil Liberties under Attack,* with contributions by Henry Steele Commager, Walter Gellhorn, R. K. Carr, and others; *The Fear of Freedom* by Francis Biddle; *The Judges and the Judged* by Merle Miller; *Ordeal by Slander* by Owen Lattimore; *Peace, War and You* by Jerome Davis; *Soviet Civilization* by Corliss Lamont; *Soviet Politics at Home and Abroad* by Frederick Schuman; *Witch Hunt* by Carey McWilliams; and *Report on the American Communist* by Morris Ernst and David Loth.

A list which places Professor Commager cheek by jowl with Jerome Davis clearly lacks fair-mindedness, not to speak of good sense. However, *Firing Line* does not recommend that librarians either burn or label these books. Its editor, in commenting on the President's Dartmouth speech of June 14, 1953, writes: "We regret President Eisenhower's choice of words. . . . This epithet 'book burning' is being pushed to the limit by Communists to create as much confusion as possible. The American Legion does not advocate book burning which is just that—setting fire to books by anyone to destroy them. Our library would be glad to have any Communist authored books for research and educational purposes. In American libraries it makes sense to us to have pro-Communist books identified for what they are and available for research. We do not think it is common sense to have books selling Communism to be on the shelves in the sections on sociology or philosophy or economics. They should be in a section marked Communism where should also be books exposing Communism. What is advocated by Communism should not be disguised as only philosophy or only economics, etc. It should be identified as Communist economics, etc. This is not book burning, but book identification of a more accurate sort. . . . Uninformed school and college students especially should at least have a label to keep them straight when they read Communist books."

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WITH the Legion's demand for "book identification of a more accurate sort" one might or might not quarrel. The library profession, however, stoutly resists proposals to label Communist and pro-Communist books as such, for the cogent reasons given in the official "Statement on Labeling" adopted by the American Library Association Council in 1951.*

A principal source of conflict between librarians and Legionaires is indicated by the report of *Firing Line* in its January 1, 1953 issue that "the Americanism Division during the past two years has received several complaints that certain books were either flatly refused at their local libraries or hidden away on inaccessible shelves, while pro-Soviet propaganda and the works of known and notorious Communists and fellow-travelers got prominent display." Citing these complaints, the editor asks: "When librarians themselves censor or keep out blacklisted books on world Communism in all its manifestations, in some cases even refusing to accept them as gifts, who, then, are the book burners?"

Like the President, the editor speaks metaphorically. In Boston and elsewhere ebullient local Legion commanders have gone considerably beyond the policy of the National Americanism Commission. But thus far none of them has suggested that Communist propaganda books be incinerated in the public square, or even privately pulped. Here and there a librarian has been accused of refusing to buy anti-Communist or conservative books.† But for the most part librarians have purchased such books when requested to do so by their patrons, or have welcomed them as gifts. There is, however, plenty of evidence that American libraries, during the 30's and late 40's especially, accumulated "unbalanced collections" containing a disproportionate number of Communist and pro-Communist books, though rarely because of any pro-Communist bias on the part of the librarian; in most cases the librarians simply bought what was recom-

*Following is the text of this statement, as printed in the July 13, 1951 issue of *ALA Bulletin:* "In view of our own convictions and those of other practicing librarians whose counsel we sought, the Committee on Intellectual Freedom recommends to the ALA Council the following policy with respect to labeling library materials: Librarians should not use the technique of labeling as a means of predisposing readers against library materials for the following reasons:

1. Although totalitarian states find it easy and even proper, according to their ethics, to establish criteria for judging publications as 'subversive,' injustice and ignorance rather than justice and enlightenment result from such practices, and the American Library Association has a responsibility to take a stand against the establishment of such criteria in a democratic state.

2. Libraries do not advocate the ideas found in their collections. The presence of a magazine or book in a library does not indicate an endorsement of its contents by the library.

3. No one person should take the responsibility of labeling publications. No sizable group of persons would be likely to agree either on the types of material which should be labeled or the sources of information which should be regarded with suspicion. As a practical consideration, a librarian who labeled a book or magazine pro-Communist might be sued for libel.

4. Labeling is an attempt to prejudice the reader, and as such, it is a censor's tool.

5. Labeling violates the spirit of the Library Bill of Rights.

6. Although we are all agreed that Communism is a threat to the free world, if materials are labeled to pacify one group, there is no excuse for refusing to label any item in the Library's collection. Because Communism, fascism or other authoritarianisms tend to suppress ideas and attempt to coerce individuals to conform to a specific ideology, American librarians must be opposed to such 'isms.' We are, then, anti-Communist, but we are also opposed to any other group which aims at closing any path to knowledge."

†Conservatives have accused librarians in a number of places of banning books solely on the basis of the latters' personal (generally liberal) opinions. This is strictly forbidden, of course, by the first article of the ALA's Bill of Rights. The problem is the impossible one of determining the degree to which the librarian's assessment of the *quality* of a given book—the library cannot afford to buy trash and the librarian rightly resists the pressure of patrons to do so—is influenced by his or her political views. A publisher whose imprint appears on a good number of recent conservative and anti-Communist books doubts that many librarians willfully and purposely practice boycott. "The librarians are human," wrote the publisher in a personal letter to this writer, "and I think they pretty much reflect the intellectual climate of the time."

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mended by the more important review publications, including the journals and book guides published by highly reputable members of their own profession.

AMONG professional librarians, few are held in higher esteem than Miss Helen E. Haines, author of *Living with Books*. The first edition of this widely used librarians' guide was published in 1935. Librarians found it admirably organized and informative. It evaluated hundreds of volumes, without any evidence of political bias. Miss Haines did not succumb to the ill-informed enthusiasm for the Soviet Union which was current during the 30's; neither then nor subsequently did she join any Communist front groups. But when the second edition of her book was issued in 1950, it displayed what seemed a dismayingly uncritical tolerance of Communist philosophy and pro-Communist authors, including some who had been exposed as underhand propagandists. This tolerance complemented an equally uncritical kind of "anti-anti-Communism" which led the author to echo vehemently exaggerations about "book-burning" and "witch-hunting." During the late 1940's, she wrote, America had succumbed to a "nationwide hysteria. 'Treason' was read into acts, associations and thoughts arbitrarily defined as disloyal; books were suppressed or removed from libraries. . . . In spite of protest and resistant action by writers, publishers, teachers, scientists, librarians, many leaders in social and political thought and a minority of newspapers, sanity and fair dealing seemed in eclipse."

To counter this trend, Miss Haines urged her colleagues to add to their collections not only the Marxist classics—to which only the most violent of the critics have objected—but also books of a more or less propagandistic and slanted nature to which objection is more valid and which the veteran librarian's apparent innocence scarcely equipped her to evaluate. Among Miss Haines's recommendations were John Somerville's *Soviet Philosophy*, which, Sidney Hook and others have shown, presents a biased and untrue picture of Soviet theory in practice; *Tomorrow's China*, an equally biased and unreliable volume by Anna Louise Strong, who for many years has been a consistent Communist sympathizer and propagandist; and also heavily slanted works—which Miss Haines describes as "authentic"—by Albert Rhys Williams, and by Hewlett Johnson (the "Red Dean" of Canterbury).

These recommendations would have seemed less extraordinary if they had been balanced by a fair and informed appraisal of the available anti-Communist books. But few books by anti-Communist writers of established competence and integrity were included in Miss Haines's recommendations. Boris Souvarine's authoritative *Life of Stalin* is not included, nor Bertram D. Wolfe's *Three Who Made a Revolution;* Miss Haines recommends instead Isaac Deutscher's mildly critical biography of Stalin. She also warns her readers specifically against "present-day biography motivated by intense political or ideological partisanship and overshadowed by personal antagonisms (as in *The Red Prussian: The Life and Legend of Karl Marx,* by Leopold Schwarzschild, and in the deadly personal enmity that imparts unintended ironic flavor to the biography of Stalin by Trotsky)." She does not even list any books by refugees from the slave labor camps of the Soviet Union. George Orwell's satirical masterpiece *1984* is dismissed as "paranoia in literature."

MISS HAINES is certainly no witch; on the contrary, she is one of the ornaments of her profession, whose services to libraries and librarians have been deservedly honored. Yet the "witch-hunters" and "book-burners" of the American Legion could find evidence in her book and its general acceptance by librarians to justify the suspicion that *some,* at least, of our American librarians were giving shelf room to disguised Communist propaganda, while failing to acquire anti-Communist books that clearly deserved purchase on their merits.

In voicing these suspicions, the local Legionaires often made subversive moun-

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tains out of molehills and inflicted undeserved opprobrium and hardship on liberal, devoted, and demonstrably non-Communist librarians; sometimes their attacks resulted in removing from circulation books which were in no sense Communist or pro-Communist, as well as Marxist classics and other books by avowed Communists which the library's patrons had every right to read. This happened more frequently, in all probability, when there was no public fight than when there was; to the degree that our freedom to read has suffered impairment during this period it has been chiefly in those unpublicized cases where the librarian, apprehending attack by patriotic or demagogic critics, has chosen discretion as the better part of valor in book selection. In such cases the librarian has imposed on himself a censorship dictated by fear, so that his book selections ceased to be guided by accepted canons, or to express a sound sense of the librarian's responsibility to his community.*

Whenever a librarian has chosen to resist pressure and, if necessary, make a public fight of it, he has usually won, with the help of the press and an aroused community. Far from being eclipsed, as Miss Haines believes, sanity and fair dealing have on the whole emerged triumphant from a decade of battles on the library front. Moreover, as a result of this testing of its rights and responsibilities, the library profession has not only strengthened itself organizationally but has gained badly needed public understanding and support.

For this achievement, credit must be given to the far-sighted leaders who in 1939 warned delegates to the San Francisco convention of the American Library Association that the librarians would be under pressure and that they had better prepare to deal with the troubles that were clearly in prospect. The first draft of the ALA's "Bill of Rights"† was written by Forrest Spaulding, at that time director of the Des Moines (Iowa) Public Library, and it was Mr. Spaulding who in the following year asked the ALA Council to appoint a standing committee "to throw the force and influence of the ALA behind any individual librarian or library

*As David H. Clift, secretary of the American Library Association, pointed out in an address to the National Council of Jewish Women, this is most likely to happen in the small libraries where the librarian is too often underpaid and undertrained. "I do suspect," said Mr. Clift, "that attempts to suppress reading and to interfere with the processes of free inquiry may find the chances of success better in smaller places. The spotlight of aroused public opinion is not likely to shine so brightly upon the small place as upon the large city. Small public libraries do not always have carefully worked out policies of book selection such as are found in the larger libraries." Alice Bryan, in *The Public Librarian*, reports that her sample study indicated that only 58 per cent of professional librarians had graduated from an undergraduate college, only 40 per cent had completed a fifth college year of professional education, and that the range of salary from the beginning to the end of the average professional library career was from less than $2,000 to less than $4,000.

†Following is the text of the American Library Bill of Rights, as published in the July-August 1948 issue of the American Library Association *Bulletin:*

"1. As a responsibility of library service, books and other reading matter selected should be chosen for values of interest, information and enlightenment of all the people for the community. In no case should any book be excluded because of the race or nationality, or the political or religious views of the writer.

2. There should be the fullest practicable provision of material presenting all points of view concerning the problems and issues of our times, international, national and local; and books or other reading matter of sound factual authority should not be proscribed or removed from library shelves because of partisan or doctrinal disapproval.

3. Censorship of books, urged or practiced by volunteer arbiters of morals or political opinion or by organizations that would establish a coercive concept of Americanism, must be challenged by libraries in maintenance of their responsibility to provide public information and enlightenment through the printed word.

4. Libraries should enlist the cooperation of allied groups in the fields of science, of education and of book publishing in resisting all abridgement of the free access to ideas and full freedom of expression that are the tradition and heritage of Americans.

5. As an institution of education for democratic living, the library should welcome the use of its meeting rooms for socially useful and cultural activities and discussions of current public questions. Such meeting places should be available on equal terms to all groups in the community regardless of the beliefs and affiliations of their members."

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board confronted with any demands for censorship of books or other material upon a library's shelves."

DURING the next few years the ALA's Committee on Intellectual Freedom had few cases, and usually the librarian involved wanted no publicity; probably there were a good many incidents which were never reported. In 1946, the Committee was alarmed by Congressman Harold Velde's bill providing for the screening of all books in the Library of Congress, but the Congress itself averted this threat by burying the bill in committee.

At the suggestion of the National Committee, state Committees on Intellectual Freedom were appointed, but didn't get into action soon enough to help local librarians defeat the state censorship bills presented to the New Hampshire legislature. In 1948 the Bill of Rights was re-adopted by the Council of the ALA, and in 1951 its application was extended to include all materials and media of communication used or collected by libraries. This inclusion had been made necessary by the ordeal of the Peoria, Illinois, library, which in 1952 had drawn the fire of the Americanism Committee of a local American Legion Post by distributing three documentary films entitled *Brotherhood of Man, Boundary Lines,* and *Peoples of the USSR.* The controversy was finally settled when the library board agreed that the comments of all film previewers were to be attached to the cans containing the rolls of film. However, this battle was not without casualties, for in the end the Peoria librarian resigned—and this had been the obvious objective of the Legion Post.

In 1951, the ALA Council adopted a statement on book-labeling based on a report submitted by Rutherford D. Rodgers, then chairman of the ALA Committee on Intellectual Freedom. By this time many of the censorship drives had concentrated on the issue of labeling. In 1950, the issue was squarely posed by the Montclair, N. J., chapter of the Sons of the American Revolution, which demanded that New Jersey libraries put a prominent label or inscription on "publications which advocate or favor Communism, which are issued or distributed by any Communist organization, or any other organization formally designated by any authorized government official or agency as Communist or subversive."

Mr. Rodgers reported to the ALA Council that nine of the eleven members of the Committee on Intellectual Freedom had voted against labeling, with two not voting, and that twenty of the twenty-four librarians of small or middle-sized libraries whom he had questioned were against labeling, the other four not replying. A library patron, when queried by his librarian, replied: "I'm an adult. Sound mind. Good education. Who the hell has the right to tell me what to read or warn me what not to read?"

ADMIRABLE in other respects as was the Statement on Labeling adopted by the ALA Council, it did not, in the opinion of a number of distinguished librarians, solve the problem of what to do about the "unbalanced collections" accumulated during the wartime honeymoon with the Soviet Union. Narrowly defined, book-labeling means marking the book or inserting in it a warning or critical description not already put in the volume by the author, the editor, or the publisher. But is the setting apart of the book on a special shelf devoted to pro- and anti-Communist books a form of labeling? Many librarians do not concede this, although classification can be and is used to accomplish substantially the same purpose as labeling. Moreover, some librarians believe that discriminative classification, supplemented by other devices such as the issuance of lists of anti-Communist books (the Intellectual Freedom Committee has been considering for some time compiling a list of current books dealing with Communism and civil liberties) are necessary to the proper discharge of the librarian's responsibility to the community.

If, as most librarians believe, the librarian has a *positive* obligation to enable his patrons to inform themselves about the totalitarian

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enemy we are fighting, does not this obligation include giving the library's patrons some clue as to the nature of what they are reading, especially in the case of books by recognized Communist propagandists and containing disguised Communist propaganda?

THE answers given by the profession to this question are not in complete agreement; nor does the line of division clearly coincide with that which separates liberals from conservatives in the library profession. For example, Ralph Ulveling,* chief librarian of the Detroit library system and past president of the American Library Association, has advocated a policy of limited circulation which would serve in some degree to restrict what he calls "one of the most important channels for one of the enemy's most important weapons of warfare, propaganda." This channel, he believes, is left open by the ordinary interpretation of the first item of the Library Bill of Rights. The statement of policy issued by the Detroit Library Commission draws a distinction between the requirements of the Reference Research Services and those of the Reading Services, where the problem of selection is to choose "the most usable books that are available . . . without regard to any obligation the total institution may have for preserving knowledge in is most comprehensive sense, or for maintaining open avenues for the fullest exercise of intellectual freedom of inquiry."

The Reference Research Services, on the other hand, are designed to provide comprehensive collections which include "even the socially, economically, religiously, or politically unorthodox materials necessary for research, for freedom of inquiry, and for information of all types."

Mr. Ulveling said that in his interpretation of this policy "sound factual information on Communism would be included in both services, but that Communist expressions of opinion or misleading propaganda would be found only in the reference services. . . ."

His statement released a spate of controversy that still continues in the professional library journals. Paul Bixler, secretary of the Committee on Intellectual Freedom and librarian of Antioch College, pointed out in the *Library Journal* of December 12, 1951, that "whatever the value of Mr. Ulveling's statement for the Detroit Public or other large libraries, it cannot be applied successfully to small or medium-sized libraries without destroying their usefulness as distributors of ideas. . . . By far the greater number of libraries in the United States cannot easily divide their collections and their facilities into two parts, as one would divide the Red Sea." At Antioch, Mr. Bixler attempts to solve the problem by using the Dewey decimal system to identify a category of Communist and anti-Communist books which are then grouped together on the library shelves. Mr. Bixler contended that the Ulveling method, applied to a small or medium-sized library, would become in effect labeling and also "eat away the advantages and values of the small library's open shelf system."

Aligned in general with Mr. Ulveling's position is Ralph Munn, director of the Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh, who declared during the 1952 Conference on Intellectual Freedom that he believed the librarian had an obligation to "attempt to identify items of disguised propaganda and eliminate them from the library's general collection."

"To my mind," continued Mr. Munn, "the rejection of disguised propaganda is fully covered by one of the traditional tenets of selection—that a book shall be honest, that it shall be what it purports to be."

*Mr. Ulveling won his spurs early in the censorship fight. In 1943, with the outbreak of the Detroit race riots, the Mayor ordered him to remove all copies of Lillian Smith's *Strange Fruit* from the public libraries. With the backing of his library board, Mr. Ulveling refused, and made his refusal stick, despite repeated threats that his obduracy would cost him his job. On the second day of the rioting Mr. Ulveling assembled his staff and got agreement on the text of a four-page folder setting forth the constitutional rights of minorities and the duties of citizens of all races and faiths to respect these rights. Within ten days the folder was printed and widely circulated; copies were mailed on request to hundreds of librarians and civic workers here and abroad; the folder is now a collector's item.

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It is probable that most American librarians sympathize with the position of the small-town library patron already quoted: that being of sound mind—or else he wouldn't be seeking the library's service—he is quite capable of utilizing the library's collection without the help of anything more than the card catalogues. The American tradition is hostile to any form of intellectual tutelage. In any case, most Americans definitely do not think it is the librarian's business to control their tastes or their politics in any way, either by selection, segregation, or labeling. Certainly the library should not be used as a channel for the dissemination of disguised Communist propaganda, and one way the librarian can prevent this, as Mr. Munn suggests, is by refusing to purchase dishonest books. On the other hand, the public library is not a "weapon in the cold war," whether for offense or defense—that is the way libraries are used back of the Iron Curtain; whereas in the free world they exist for their own sake, to disseminate truth and knowledge. We should be wary of even the best-intentioned attempts to regulate them with some other purpose in mind, or in any kind of tutelary spirit.

In practice, of course, neither the librarians nor their patrons are obliged to face any great dramatic choices. Time, and the response of the librarians to the changing political climate, are visibly healing the scars of the library battles that have disturbed the equanimity of so many American communities. With or without the prodding of their critics, librarians are correcting the "balance" of their collections by buying more anti-Communist books—and sometimes by retiring the worst of the disguised party-line books to the stacks. This undoubtedly had much to do with the fact that the pressure on the public libraries has been lessening. Over a hundred disputes over public library collections were reported to the Committee on Intellectual Freedom in 1953, the peak year. In 1954 the number dropped to thirty-six. Pressure on the school libraries continued with little sign of let-up, but on the whole librarians were less harassed than when McCarthy was in flower, and considerably less fearful; there was no more talk of book burning. Battle experience has taught them that although freedom to read must still be fought for, there is little imminent danger that it will be lost in this country.

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THE LIBERAL RELIGIOUS IMPULSE IN ISRAEL

An American Rabbi "Spies Out the Land"

HERBERT WEINER

THE illustrious 19th-century rabbi Israel Salanter once compared religion "to a bird held in the hand. If grasped too tightly it will die—and if held too loosely, it may fly away."

In Israel today there are those who claim that the "bird" has been squeezed to death by the constricting laws of an over-rigid Orthodoxy. The Orthodox, however, point out that where the "hand" has been too open, religion itself has fled. What is indisputable is that the religious atmosphere of the Holy Land is sickly, and this festering condition will continue to erupt from time to time.

The prescriptions for Israel's religious malaise differ as widely as do the diagnoses. In the past these differences have centered around issues like the rabbinic monopoly of marriage and divorce, the drafting of Orthodox girls into the army, Sabbath restrictions, and regulations against the raising of pigs. Recently a new issue has been added and its degree of importance is emphasized by an Israeli newspaper headline: "Raising of Pigs and Reform Synagogues in Israel—Issues in Coming Elections."

The latest controversy was probably provoked by an announcement of the Hebrew Union College that it intended to build a school and chapel in Jerusalem. Indeed, for several years religious liberals in America have passed resolutions urging the "establishment of an indigenous non-Orthodox Judaism in Israel." Now these plans and sentiments have begun to evoke violent reaction from the Orthodox leadership, of which the following release from the Israeli Ministry of Religion is typical: "We have been reluctant to admit that there is a greater difference between Reform and true Judaism than between Catholics and Protestants." And "Reform Jews are more dangerous to the religion of Israel than admitted atheists."

Through the haze of charges and countercharges perhaps one can make out the issue. What *is* the actual state of religion in Israel? What role does it play in the inner life of Israelis? And is there a genuine call for "liberal" Judaism?

These were some of the questions I took with me to Israel some months ago, and on which I have been reporting to the Reform movement in England and America. But it is with reports as it is with the hands the rabbi spoke of: they, too, risk breaking the delicate bird of truth on the rack of some schematic formulation. It may be that the following excerpts of a journal kept during my discussions and meetings with Israelis will offer a more living—even if less tidy—picture of a situation in Israel that raises questions not only for Israelis but for the Jewish community in America.

On the plane: I have been trying to put together the impressions of Israel's religious situation I carry with me from America. I am not, of course, the first one sent to "spy

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IN RECENT times there have been reports that, chafing under the restrictions of a rigorous Orthodoxy, many Israelis have been wishing for a more liberalized Judaism. To explore this situation, HERBERT WEINER, rabbi of Temple Israel in South Orange, New Jersey, and a frequent contributor to COMMENTARY, journeyed to Israel on a commission from the World Union for Progressive Judaism. Here, in the first of a two-part article, we publish excerpts from the diary he kept on his trip. They show how the specific question he went to Israel to find the answer to broadened out into a consideration of some of the ultimate problems concerning the place and role of Judaism in the modern Jewish state. Rabbi Weiner was born in Boston in 1919 and received his education at the University of Massachusetts, the Jewish Institute of Religion, and the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. His last appearance in COMMENTARY was in March 1954 with "Rav Kuk's Path to Peace Within Israel."

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out the land." A number of Reform leaders had reported to the rabbis at their last convention that not only was there wide dissatisfaction with the restrictions on religious freedom imposed by an Orthodox minority, but a "great thirst" for a liberal Judaism in Israel. Others had been skeptical about any such "thirst," and the final resolution asked for an "indigenous" Judaism, emphasizing that there was no intention of imposing any American Jewish religious patterns on Israel.

But, the question still remained: What was the strength of the reputed impulse toward a modern, liberalized Judaism, and in what ways was it manifesting itself? I reviewed what Israelis visiting America had told me. On the one hand, the enthusiastic, one might even say fiery, response of a Hebrew University professor to the prospects of a liberal synagogue in Jerusalem: "They will burn it down," he had prophesied, it seemed to me almost gleefully, "but we'll build it again. And if they burn it down again, we'll build it again." His wife, demurring, had suggested that liberal religion could well arrive in Israel unaccompanied by conflagrations. But she agreed with her husband that thousands of Israelis would be interested.

On the other hand, the Israeli couple studying at Columbia had been rather amused by my questions. The man, a teacher for many years in Israel, was not aware of any thirst there for liberal Judaism, or at least not in the kibbutz in the Emek where he worked—and his wife agreed. Perhaps there was in the cities, they suggested, for they had seen how on festivals like Passover and Shavuoth people who felt uncomfortable in the Orthodox synagogues came to the kibbutzim to taste the holiday atmosphere there. The teacher's wife had often arranged these festivals in their kibbutz, and while they eschewed direct religious content, she felt they were beautiful. I asked about Yom Kippur, a holiday emphasizing neither nature nor nationalism. "Yom Kippur is still a problem," she agreed, "but our settlement has solved it fairly well. We dress in our best clothes and the food is special."

"The food is special!" I had exclaimed.

"Yes," she laughed. "Those who want to, of course, can fast, but we gather the children at sundown before the meal. I play a record of 'Kol Nidre' and we read some appropriate selections from the Bible and Rabbinic literature and even from the prayer book."

I asked if the selections were read or "prayed."

"No, they are read," her husband answered with a smile. There was a pause while I tried to think of further questions. "I suppose it really is a question of faith," he offered. "It depends on whether you are a 'believer.' "

I remembered feeling somewhat irritated at his pat analysis of the religious problem in terms of "belief"—in part, I suppose, I felt a troubled realization of how little "belief" had to do with so many synagogue activities in America.

Shannon Airport, Ireland: Just finished something by the talented poet Yitzhak Lamdan, recently deceased, whose journal *Sheaves* was often devoted to religious questions. A particularly telling passage: "It is not a paradox to say that if there are enemies of religion in Israel, enemies of faith and of the lofty values of Torah, then these enemies are primarily the official leaders of our religion, and through their insensitivity, bad manners, and hypocritical tactics, and through their limited vision and striving for power, a striving which does not bother about means, they are the ones who more than any others drive away the younger generation." I recalled similar sentiments, based on different premises, offered by a peppery Orthodox professor of chemistry at the Hebrew University, Dr. Isaiah Lebovitz. A group of American rabbis visiting Jerusalem several years ago had been both impressed and disconcerted by this thin, medium-sized man who wore a narrow peaked cap perched precariously on the top of his head and whose cropped mustache suited his bristly manner of speech. With a wry tongue, Lebovitz had criticized the "fossilization" of rabbinic leadership, and at the same time disturbed his own audience by asking, "And where does it say that we must observe the Torah in order to be happy—who says that religion must make us happy?" Some of his essays on the religious problems of Israel, recently published as a book, are quite an antidote to the "peace of mind," the "family that prays together stays together" kind of religion. Dr. Lebovitz objects strenuously to

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any attempt "to sell religion" on the basis of health, psychology, or even ethics. In Judaism, "there is a complete contradiction between the worship of the God of the Torah and the worship of the God in the heart or conscience, which is really the worship of man. . . ."

"The purpose of the Sabbath," he writes, "is not to take care of the recreational needs of the working man. For this purpose we have the Histadrut. . . . There is no purpose to the Sabbath except holiness—to impose upon one-seventh of the life of man a special way of living which does not stem from his own nature, inclinations, and needs, but from his decision to subject himself to the Kingdom of Heaven—a way of life different from the natural way of life." It is from this almost austere Orthodoxy that Dr. Lebovitz lashes out at the present rabbinic leadership in Israel. He points out that those who protest against Jews working on the Sabbath do not hesitate to drink the water of Tel Aviv brought to them by Jews working on the Sabbath; that they take full advantage of the security provided by the non-Orthodox boys and girls who guard the borders on the Sabbath. The truth is, he claims, that the leaders of Orthodox Jewry do not really want to undertake the responsibility of applying the laws of tradition to the new conditions of the Jewish state. They prefer to maintain the illusion that Jews are still a society living under the protection of a non-Jewish government, and thus maintain the laws which were adopted only for the "Exile."

I wondered what the official Israeli religious leadership felt. Did they really prefer that the mass of Israelis who could not accept Orthodoxy lead completely secular lives rather than become interested in some non-Orthodox form of Judaism? One of the most influential leaders of Orthodoxy in America had given me his answer by saying, "All that a non-Orthodox religious Judaism can do is deprive people of their conscience. Today, though the secular may fight religion, at least they know what it is. They know that religion means the full observance of the Torah. Knowing this, if they some day become *baalai tshuvah*—repentant—they will at least know what to return to. No," he concluded, "Liberal or Conservative religion is worse than no religion at all because it sanctifies the errors of the people."

Lydda Airport: We arrived about eleven at night and circling round the airport we saw not only the brightly lit expanse of Tel Aviv below, but also large patches of light up and down the coastline. Somehow, I thought I could recognize the smell of the air and ground as we walked from the plane toward the airport building—a slightly acrid odor of dust and clay; you get it more sharply near the ruined Arab villages. The encounter with the customs and visa officials was much briefer than two years ago. On the bus to Tel Aviv everyone sat in silence, peering through the windows at the clusters of box-like houses that have arisen near the tin huts of abandoned immigration camps.

There was no conversation in the bus—it was the silence that seems natural to human beings who have just been wafted through space to descend upon a piece of land where life is lived in a vastly different way. But then the bus driver turned the radio on and our first hour in the Holy Land was filled with the loud blare of American popular music.

Tel Aviv: The houses seem a bit more dilapidated and the faces in the streets reveal the recent influx from North Africa and the Orient. It may be a hasty impression, but there seems less joy around. I asked my taxi driver, Shlomo, about it, and he agreed—there was a grimness and tiredness. "Look at me," he explained. "I was wounded in the war, so I had the right to buy and operate a taxi. This was a good job once. Now I have to work seven days a week from morning until late at night just to feed and clothe my family. Almost everybody is in the same position. A government worker with a good job will get maybe 180 to 200 pounds a month after taxes are deducted. A good hat costs about 25 pounds. Figure that out. When I buy a suit I have to make a loan to pay it back over months. I wouldn't mind," he added, "if only I could see some hope for the future, in three or five years—but what change can there be?—and this after twenty-five years of working and fighting."

I tried to turn the conversation towards the religious situation. But apart from some bitter words about the attempts of the Orthodox to cut down taxi service on the Sabbath, Shlomo didn't seem interested. Well, I think even Maimonides admitted that a man can-

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not be deeply concerned with religion when "he is hungry or weak or pursued by his enemies."

* * *

YESTERDAY I called the office of a woman who had said some time ago that she was eager to arrange some meetings with people in Tel Aviv to discuss liberal Judaism—but she had left that very morning and would return in a year. I wondered for a moment if "they," as a mystical friend used to refer to the Deciding Powers above, were really with me. . . .

* * *

I'M STILL trying to get some meetings together, but without much success. One of the people in charge of the ZOA House here comforted me: "Nothing spiritually new grows in Tel Aviv." As for religion—last year the ZOA had run High Holiday services in their new building, and had filled the hall—because it was air-conditioned, some said. But the ZOA man had wondered whether it was not due to a revived interest in religion. So this year they arranged a special Sabbath service before the High Holidays with a dazzling array of cantors—they love cantors here, he says. Despite lots of publicity, they were forced to call the service off a few days before the Sabbath because of lack of response.

He was discouraged in general. "It's quite different from the way it used to be." His mood reminded me of my last visit to the ZOA House two years ago when, with a group of American tourists, I met a blond, middle-aged woman from Tel Aviv. After the customary conversational skirmish between Israelis and American tourists—"When are you coming to Israel?" and the answer, "We can do more for Israel working in America"—the lady from Tel Aviv had burst out, "Well, if you don't come over we'll be drowned by the niggers! Never mind that look," she had continued angrily to the Americans, whose mouths had dropped. "Never mind—I'm not Jesus Christ and I don't have to love them. Twenty-five years ago I gave up a comfortable home in Canada to settle here. We wanted to build a land not rich in material things but with ideals and culture—and we built it. In spite of everything, we built it, and now it's being torn down and we're being drowned by a mass of illiterate and barbaric immigrants from the *mellahs* of North Africa. Sure they're Jewish, but what have I got in common with them?"

Ramat Hadar: I think I've arranged my first group meeting at Ramat Hadar, a village near Tel Aviv and one of the older settlements specializing in chicken farming. I was visiting relatives there today and attended an executive meeting of the village leaders. They were talking about their sewage problems, but by a switch admittedly more desperate than deft, I turned the conversation to liberal religion. One of the settlers, a tall Yugoslav Jew, offered to arrange a meeting the very next night, promising that I would find "fertile ground" here.

* * *

THE meeting, advertised as a "talk on liberal Judaism in America," has been held but I am not sure what conclusions to draw from it. Because some people had complained that there was something improper about having a Reform rabbi speak on religion in a community building which was used by some of the older men for services on the Sabbath, we met in the schoolhouse instead. It was cold in the classroom and we sat in our coats. Some twenty-five people had gathered, and after my carefully prepared talk in Hebrew the Yugoslav who helped to arrange the meeting opened the discussion. He felt the need, he said, for a communal type of religious expression that he could offer his child. "I've tried to go to synagogue a number of times," he said, "but never yet have I heard a word there that goes to my heart, or bears upon my own life." One young teacher, who seemed to have followed my talk sympathetically, confessed that he felt he was raising a "generation of Karaites who knew the Bible but little else of the spirit of Jewish life as it had been developed after the Biblical period."

At that point, somebody standing in back of the room asked for the floor and cleared his throat. I was told that he was a former member of the Marxist Mapam, and now a teacher at Ramat Hadar. He launched into a vehement defense of the character of Israeli youth, objecting to the "constant maligning" of it that was going on in Israel. If I wanted to see true religion, he suggested, then I ought to go to the Negev and see the youth working and fighting there. To be

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willing to work on the land and to offer one's life to the freedom of the state—that was ethics and religion in the highest sense.

I tried to warm up the discussion by contrasting the last speaker's words with the ideas of Dr. Lebovitz, but few had apparently heard of Dr. Lebovitz. I read them a passage from one of his essays: "We must ask ourselves whence comes this youth, that sees nothing wrong in carrying out a terrible act of retaliation [the Kibya attack]. It is all the result of using the religious category of 'holiness' for values which are social, national, and political—a type of usage which is frequent among us—the use of the category of the absolute—that which is beyond any human revaluation or reckoning—applied to secular matters . . . the use of the Bible and the prayer book as sanctions for values which really spring from the human conscience and feeling. . . . If the nation and its welfare and the state and its defense are 'holy,' then even Kibya is possible and permissible. This is the terrible punishment that results from the transgression of the commandment, Thou shalt not take the name of Thy God in vain."

The only reaction to this passage was the comment of an elderly man, who in a mixture of German and Hebrew said, "These are interesting matters and perhaps when we have straightened out some of our economic and military problems, we will be able to think about them more seriously." The Yugoslav again tried to help: "If we can find so much time and energy for politics, we should find time for this as well." But it was obvious that the discussion was ended.

Afterwards, some people told me that there hadn't been more discussion because most of those present had not understood my Hebrew. Although they had lived in Israel for over twenty years, they could participate in a discussion of this sort only if there was a German translation. The farmers in Ramat Hadar could speak a market-place Hebrew and read a newspaper—but to read a book in Hebrew or participate in an intellectual discussion on an unusual subject was still a strain—this after twenty years. And doesn't poverty of language affect not only the powers of communication, but thought processes as well, inhibiting subtle distinctions? No wonder that some of Martin Buber's best books have not been translated from their original German into Hebrew—for want of a market, say the publishers in Israel.

True, some of Judaism's most inspired religious experiences, in the Biblical period and afterwards, emerged out of circumstances at least as harsh as those facing the Israeli today. But if any specifically Israeli religious impulse is to manifest itself at this time, it can hardly be the intellectualized kind possible in countries where there is both the language and the leisure for extensive discussion.

Jerusalem: At last I found someone in Israel who is eager to work for liberal Judaism. He is another Yugoslav Jew, the co-owner of a small hotel in Jerusalem, and two years ago he had actually arranged "liberal" religious services in the dining room of his hotel. He tells me that there are some three thousand Yugoslav Jews in Jerusalem, many of whom had belonged to the Liberal synagogue in their native country. He assures me that many other thousands would be interested. I asked him, of course, why if there was such interest they did not start religious activities themselves. His reply was that the economic situation was too oppressive. This year he had tried again to arrange High Holiday services and, at the suggestion of the officiating rabbi, charged four or five pounds for a seat. But even this small sum was too large, and the services were not held. He promised to arrange a meeting of Yugoslav Jews to discuss the problem with me.

The hotelkeeper is sincerely troubled about the lack of opportunity for non-Orthodox religious expression in the country and, particularly, about the lack of religious teaching for children outside the Orthodox religious schools. To illustrate this, he related an incident involving his eight-year-old son. A few weeks ago the boy had noticed a small group gathered around a man who was telling stories near the corner of his street. He joined the circle. The story-teller made a date with the children for a meeting at the same place the following week. After several more meetings the man invited the boys to continue the story-telling sessions at a nearby house. Some of the boys, including the hotelkeeper's son, had gone along, and here is the way the boy described what had happened: "There was a blackboard, and on it the man drew two pictures. Under one pic-

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ture he wrote 'the good man,' and under the other 'the evil man.' Once, he went on, this bad man had come along and slapped the face of the good man. The good man could have slapped back, but instead turned the other cheek. The name of that good man was Jesus." The man was a Christian missionary. A growing number of children have been attending missionary schools this year, and an anti-missionary society has been formed here.

* * *

THE subject of Christian missionaries in Israel has been receiving a great deal of attention in the press these days. One member of the Knesset had been telling me that it is symptomatic of a profound spiritual problem in Israel and not to be dismissed lightly, nor explained by food packages and free tuition at the mission schools. He pointed out that a definite spiritual vacuum was felt by many young people since the establishment of the state, that they were yearning for some "intangible something" to replace the Zionism that had previously engaged their spiritual yearnings. Calls like "the conquest of the Negev" do not fill the inner emptiness, which this particular member of the Knesset felt was really a religious thirst.

The Knesset member could understand, he said, why some sincere and young people might well find in the Christian missions a spirituality and dedication lacking in their own Jewish religious institutions.

Everyone seems to agree that something is needed to fill the empty spiritual space left by the attainment of the Zionist dream. But is there any connection between this "something" and liberal religion?

* * *

THE meeting with the Yugoslav Jews fell flat, and the hotel owner who had been so enthusiastic about the possibility of liberal Judaism in Jerusalem was embarrassed. He told me he had been out of town the day of the meeting and that someone had gone around to the people who were planning to come and warned them that the purpose of the meeting was to discuss the founding of a "new religion." As a result, only two men showed up. One of them, who had been the president of the Liberal religious community in Yugoslavia, came in order to tell me that there was definitely a need for a Liberal synagogue in Jerusalem and that Yugoslav Jews would be interested, but that nothing would happen unless they were provided with a building where they could worship as a community. Then he went on, with an earnestness that broke through his faulty Hebrew and German: "You have to understand what is going on here culturally. They want us to become one nation quickly and ask that we mix always with the others. Israel is supposed to be a melting pot. *Nu,* I hope the pot itself doesn't melt, and if it doesn't, we'll all some day speak Hebrew. But this will not happen in our generation. For six years I have been trying to learn Hebrew. I know now I'll never be able really to speak it. I would like to—but I can't, that's all. What then should I do—give up my pleasure in conversation, in telling a joke, in hearing a lecture? Look, we got together with Jews from Iraq at one meeting. They eat certain types of foods and so a smell comes from their mouths which they don't notice because they are used to it. But I do notice it. And they notice a smell from my mouth and what makes the Iraqi laugh doesn't make me laugh; and vice versa."

The sincerity with which he spoke made vivid the tragedy involved in the campaign for Hebrew now going on in Israel. "One language means one heart," is a slogan you read in buses, and posted in the streets. Unpublicized is the genuine shrinking of the meaningful content of life suffered by a generation which must learn to give up its native tongue, which calls itself, ironically, "manure" for the future.

* * *

ZVI SCHIFFRIN arranged a meeting with the "Anglo-Saxons," as American and British Jews are called in Israel. Zvi is a tall, good-looking boy with direct and friendly blue eyes whose job it is to help the "Anglo-Saxons" find jobs in Israel.

It was not an easy task, he explains, because a good proportion of these coveted immigrants from the West were "crackpots" who, having been maladjusted at home, remained equally maladjusted here.

We had agreed to conduct the meeting in Hebrew, but after ten minutes everybody lapsed into English. There was the usual talk about feeling "something" missing since the war. Some claimed that they missed "Jewish content" even in Jerusalem. Schiffrin voiced a thought with which many agreed.

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He felt the main problem in Israel today was a moral one, and that there had been a definite personal and communal backsliding during the last two or three years. "Anyone who doesn't want to *histader*—feather his own nest—is considered a bit of a fool. And you hear so much talk these days about material things—like getting an apartment or adding another room."

A tall young man with curly short-cropped dark hair, who had been silent so far, spoke up, and everybody listened to him with respect. He was a young American who had been blinded in the third week of the Israeli war. (Despite his complete loss of sight, he had only a few weeks ago earned his doctorate in foreign languages from the Hebrew University.) Sitting in his chair, his hand resting on the halter of the seeing-eye dog that lay by his side, he protested against the constant talk about spiritual emptiness in Israeli youth. He thought that there was no more of a spiritual or moral crisis in Israel than anywhere else; less of one, in fact. Maybe he suggested, what the "Anglo-Saxons" were really feeling was a natural nostalgia for the culture and homes they had left behind. It was obvious from the quiet that followed his remarks that he had touched a sensitive spot. Few of the "Anglo-Saxons" were free from inner struggle as long as they held on to passports that could at any time rescue them from the austerity and strenuousness of Israeli life. They were looking for help. They wanted to reinforce the idealism which had brought them to Israel in the first place and was now in danger of evaporating in the weariness and cynicism they felt all about them. What they needed was new inspiration—but nobody at the meeting was at all sure that the synagogue and prayer and religion could offer it.

* * *

An American who left his kibbutz in the Northern Galil after five years told me he feels this lack of "something" was in part responsible for his leaving; and he thinks it is definitely a religious matter. "We find out in a kibbutz that not all problems are solved by communal living. The girl who can't find a husband and sits in her room alone at night, or the parents who lose a child—they need solace. Isn't that part of what religion deals with—the blows and puzzles of life?"

His kibbutz had a mixture of Lithuanian and American Jews, and the attitudes toward religion there had reflected these different origins. "I didn't know you were *aduk*—Orthodox," a Lithuanian friend had commented upon entering the American's room and seeing the Ten Commandments hung on the wall, and the American had found it almost impossible to explain to his neighbor that one could be religious and still not Orthodox. Yet this American felt that even among the European Jews there were now definite signs of a yearning for religion. "When I came to the kibbutz in 1947, only three people had registered for fasting on Yom Kippur. Five years later half the kibbutz was fasting—why?"

He described the Bar Mitzvah ceremony which had been instituted at his kibbutz. A boy or girl, when they reached the age of thirteen, prepared a paper on a portion of the Bible and delivered it before the kibbutz on a Sabbath eve. Thirteen *"mitzvot"*—commandments—were also involved in the ceremony. These "commandments" had, of course, nothing to do with religion. They consisted of tests in which the boy proved himself—as, for example, working a full day in a certain branch of agriculture, or spending a day by himself in the city. One year, the story goes, one of the "commandments" was to shoot rats that were overrunning the settlement that year. "But," asks this American, "why did they have to have a Bar Mitzvah ceremony at all at the age of thirteen? The time of entrance to the political parties is sixteen." No, something deeper was involved here—a sense of spiritual frustration. Look, he said, at the bitter political contention that has split one of the oldest kibbutzim in Israel —Ein Charod. Ostensibly it was a difference over an East- or West-oriented foreign policy. But can political differences account for the violent hatreds which flared up between families and friends who had worked together for so many years? The American felt that the antagonisms there were really rooted in an ever-growing feeling of emptiness. The mystics, too, liked to trace the destructive influences in life to spiritual power which does not find its proper outlet.

* * *

This afternoon I interrupted my schedule of meetings for a trip to Ramat Rachel, a kibbutz on the outskirts of Jerusalem where

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the Egyptian army was stopped during the war. The heavily pock-marked walls still give evidence of the fury of the fighting. Some Arab workers were building a house on the Jordanian side and we were able to see them clearly and hear their shouts and laughter. Watching them you thought how easy it would be for somebody with a loaded gun, on either side, to pull the trigger and stop the laughter.

Ramat Rachel is not a religious kibbutz, but a group of young people here have been experimenting with religion. They set aside a room, empty except for a constantly burning light hanging from the ceiling, and a table in the center on which stand a laver of water and some bread, reminiscent, I suppose, of the "shew-bread" in the Temple. A man who had attended one of their services reported that it consisted of a period of silent meditation followed by the reading of a Psalm. He had asked permission to recite the Kaddish, and the young people had not objected. Probably similar experiments were occurring elsewhere in Israel, and it would be worthwhile finding out about them and comparing them.

Anyway, at least one person in Israel thinks that there is a connection between this yearning for "something" and liberal Judaism. The following letter appeared in the Jerusalem *Post* only a few days ago:

Sir: Your leader of December 13 on our "spiritual famine" ("Banning the Robe") was praiseworthy and long due. It described a lack in this country which cries to high heaven.

Cannot something be done to satisfy this need? One of the most effective means for filling this need comes through community religious services, but why do so few people and youth attend services? Why not try to make the services and the spiritual environment in the house of worship and the house itself more attractive? My experiences in the United States and in the U.S. Army lead me to think that we need shorter services and prayers, more singing together, a more dignified and reverent atmosphere in the place of worship. The entire family should be able to pray together. My wife, for instance, used to attend services with me in the U.S. where we could participate in worship as a family—she will not attend services where she has to sit in a woman's gallery.

Yours, etc.,
Ben Gale

Haifa, December 28.

Jerusalem and Tel Aviv—Israel's liberal synagogues: I set out to visit the "liberal" synagogues, but the truth is that there are none in Israel. There are indeed synagogues in Tel Aviv, Haifa, and Jerusalem that are associated with rabbis who were "liberal" in Europe, but they are now small German *landsmannschaften* congregations whose services are fully Orthodox.

Rabbi Phillip, the leader of the synagogue in Jerusalem, is a round-faced, middle-aged man anxious not to forfeit the recognition he has finally won from the Chief Rabbinate, which made him *officially* a rabbi in Israel. He sat behind a desk covered with German and Hebrew magazines, adjusted a *yarmelke* on his bald head, and puffed a pipe as he explained the intricacies of Israel's religious situation. American Reform leaders, he claimed, don't understand the nature of synagogue life in Israel. They don't understand that were he, Rabbi Phillip, to make any radical changes in the service, his congregation would not stand with him against the violent opposition of the Orthodox. However, he pointed out, in his synagogue they do read the prayers related to the sacrifices in the Temple silently.

No, said Rabbi Phillip, people who are interested in praying in the synagogue are not interested in launching any crusade for changes in the prayers; while those who are interested in religious crusades are really not interested in praying in the synagogue. Rabbi Phillip thinks that if any changes come about in the future, they will come from the Orthodox kibbutz movement, say, Hapoel Hamizrachi.

There is indeed some kind of religious ferment going on in many of the Hapoel Hamizrachi kibbutzim. Only a few days ago, I heard of a debate that took place in one of them over the question of shaving. Some of the settlers, contrary to Jewish law, had begun to use razors, and the question was whether they should be allowed to remain in the settlement. So far the decision has been that they can.

There is a strain between these settlements, which are trying to adjust Talmudic law to actual realities, and the official rabbinate, whose effort to meet the issue has been awkward and insufficient. "I have worked hard," writes Chief Rabbi Herzog in an article illustrating the success of

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Israel's religious leadership in meeting the problems of modern living, "to solve the question of milking cows on the Sabbath, and with the help of technicians . . . I have finally reached a solution whereby it can be done by a machine operated and set by an automatic clock before the Sabbath." But many problems remain that defeat this kind of solution. It is doubtful, however, whether the tension will ever become great enough to break the emotional and intellectual subjugation of these settlements to the authority of the rabbis in the cities.

Tel Aviv: The "liberal" rabbi in Tel Aviv is Rabbi Rosenberg. He is younger than Rabbi Phillip, and has a delightful talent for mimicry and caricature that is used most effectively when he talks about Reform Jewish leadership outside of Israel. Rabbi Rosenberg feels that if financial resources and understanding had been provided by the liberal Jewish movements abroad in earlier years, something substantial could have been accomplished—now it's a bit late, for the mold has been formed. He feels that American Reform leaders don't understand the Israeli attitude toward religious matters. "They think that if we had men and women sit together during services, great changes would immediately take place in synagogue life." When a delegation of American rabbis visited with him some time ago, he had advised them not to smoke in public on Saturday, but some of the rabbis had resented his suggestion as being contrary to their "principles." "They simply don't understand that Israelis cannot associate the term 'rabbi' with a person who smokes on the Sabbath."

Unlike Rabbi Phillip, Rosenberg has had difficulty in receiving recognition as a rabbi, and it has not been easy to earn a living. Recently he became a teacher in the public school system, although he still devotes part of his time to the small synagogue made up of German Jews that he has presided over since his arrival in Israel. I asked him whether he sensed any interest in religion among his students. His answer, if not reflecting his own bitterness, reflected a situation that called for real analysis. "A peculiar thing," he told me, "and it frightens me, but the only young people in the school that seem to feel this interest in religion are the sickly and maladjusted ones."

I went to services at Rabbi Rosenberg's synagogue this Saturday morning and brought with me what Israelis call a "condition of soul"—which is to say "the blues." I think it was engendered by the Sabbath meal the night before. It is the custom of my hotel owner to invite those of his guests who are from abroad, a few Orthodox rabbis, and a large number of cantors to the Friday night meal. The cantors get their meals free, but more important for them, they have the opportunity to display their vocal talents before American Jews who may become interested in importing them from Israel. The obvious eagerness of the cantors to find favor in the eyes of rich Americans as well as God was depressing. Afterwards, a young American soldier on leave in Tel Aviv started talking with one of the young Orthodox rabbis. The American had confided to the rabbi that he, on occasion, went out with *shiksas*. In a burst of missionary zeal, the rabbi expounded on the great danger that lay in this—namely that children might be born out of an impure marriage. As it was, he explained, Israel was filled with people who had inherited permanent and "biologically transmittable" defects of soul because their mothers, though Jewish, did not regularly go to the *mikvah* (ritual bath). The rabbi didn't know what could be done now to remedy this defect of the Israeli people—only the Messiah could help. The soldier, who had begun the conversation with the rabbi in good humor, finally just walked off.

It all seemed so hopelessly irreconcilable that night—the gap between the world of religion as it is seen in Israel, and people like the young American soldier.

The "condition of soul" was still with me when I entered Rabbi Rosenberg's synagogue the next morning. His synagogue is one flight up, so that it is easy to glance from the prayer book through the windows at the passers-by below. There were only about twenty-five men at the services and one little boy who stood near his father, his eyes riveted on the Sabbath strollers below crowding the sidewalks of the main thoroughfare. The service was conducted with pleasant decorum. An elderly German Jew was called to read the *Haftorah* portion, which was from Isaiah and instead of chanting he read the words slowly and distinctly,

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spacing the words. "In the days to come Jacob shall take root, Israel shall blossom and bud; and the face of the world shall be filled with fruitage. . . ."

Everyone in the synagogue knew why the old man was reading slowly. The papers were filled that week with news of the spy trials in Egypt and the troubles along the Gaza Strip, and he was pointing out the relevance of Isaiah's prophecy. "And they that were lost in Assyria shall come and they that were dispersed in the land of Egypt shall come," he went on, "and they shall worship the Lord in the holy mountain of Jerusalem."

Looking at their faces in the street, you could see that they had come from "Assyria" and "Egypt," and many other places. Everybody knew this, of course, but as you looked at them while the words of Isaiah were being read, the strangeness of it all came home.

After the services, I walked towards my hotel behind a North African couple who, with a child on either side, blocked the sidewalk. But nobody was in a hurry under the bright Sabbath sunshine.

My "condition of soul" had quite disappeared. The prayers of the synagogue had been pleasant and the words of Isaiah had been moving in their relevance. It was good, even uplifting, to feel, if only for a few moments, something of the strange connection that existed between the struggling here in Israel and the words of the prophets. It set the poverty and the military danger and the tedious routine in larger pattern, and something of that "larger pattern" colored the rest, at least for a while. Was this the function the synagogue could fill? Could it offer a dimension of meaning and a largeness of perspective of the kind so necessary to people immersed in the immediate and wearying details of a never-ending struggle for mere existence?

One thing seemed clear. The fact that most people were walking in the streets that Sabbath morning, rather than sitting in the synagogue, had little to do with changes in the prayers, or even with the problem of men and women sitting together. People were outside the synagogue simply because they didn't feel the need for prayer and synagogue at all. It was not the ritual they minded, but the fact that, as the Yugoslav farmer had said, they heard nothing there that went "to the heart" of their felt needs.

No, hovering over and above all these meetings about liberal Judaism was a question more basic than ritual or length of service—the question of religion itself. The unspoken thought in every discussion was—"Can religion offer us what we need today? Is it really a necessary dimension of life?" For if it is less than necessary, then there is no room for it in Israel today. Israelis have time and patience only for the most necessary tasks in their grim struggle for life.

Perhaps this is what troubled me about the remark of that Israeli teacher in America when I asked him about the need for religion in Israel. There, it depends on whether you are a "believer," he had said. In America it doesn't at all. It is possible for rabbi and congregation to have an unspoken and perhaps unconscious agreement that synagogue, prayer, and religious ceremony are things you participate in on occasion, whether you believe or not. American religious institutions may flourish for so many reasons other than religious. They are a means of Jewish identification, a place for Jewish education for the children, a way of assuming community responsibility—all perfectly valid reasons in America, but irrelevant to the Israeli, who can achieve these things outside the synagogue. Here there can be only one primary reason for synagogue interest, and that is—religious belief.

Ramat Gan: Rabbi Rosenberg told me about one Schweiger, or Dmiel, as he has recently renamed himself. He is a teacher of some repute who came to Israel with the famous Second Aliyah in 1905 and lived for many years in Kibbutz Ein Charod. Rabbi Rosenberg said I ought to get the reactions of a man like Dmiel, as typical of the feelings of Israel's dominant intellectual element, the generation of the old Russian Zionist immigration. What was more, Dmiel, unlike most of that generation, has become very interested lately in some type of religious revival.

I went to Dmiel's three-room apartment in Ramat Gan on a Saturday afternoon. A white-haired man in his sixties with a warm manner, he invited me in for a glass of tea and told me enthusiastically about his "ex-

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periment." Some fifteen families had gathered about him in Ramat Gan. Their approach was practical. "Words like 'religion' or 'faith,'" he explained, "must be avoided because the Israeli identifies them with concepts that they are not ready to accept." His group was trying to arrange a sort of modern Shulchan Aruch—a new code of laws. They had already decided to light candles on Sabbath eve, although many of the group refused to offer a blessing over them. They had also decided to refrain from cooking during the Sabbath day, and lately they had been gathering in the morning to read the Torah together. "As for prayer—well, we're just beginning our discussion on what to do on Yom Kippur, and so we will have to face that question." Dmiel indicated that he himself would like to see the group participate in prayer services. Despite the warm reception he gave me, Dmiel was somewhat suspicious of the interest of Reform Jewish organizations in Israeli religious matters.

"Reform to many of us," he explained, "is still associated with assimilation and anti-Zionism."

The next Friday evening I went to the Dmiels' for supper; his seventeen-year-old son joined us. He was wearing a thin blue shirt, open wide at the collar as if to proclaim that, though it was winter, he needed no undershirt. The young lad placed a knapsack in the corner of the room and then came to the table, where he sat silently, smiling slightly while his father put on a battered hat and recited the Kiddush. I asked the boy if young people he knew were at all interested in the subjects his father and I were discussing. "They're too abstract for us," he said with a good-natured grin. A short while later he excused himself from the table, picked up the small knapsack, said *"Shalom,"* and went out.

"He is going on an overnight hike," his father explained; and then as if further explanation were needed, added, "That's our sabra. They are a generation educated for outer deeds more than inner thoughts."

I am afraid that the reaction of Dmiel's son is typical of what I get in Israel whenever I try to talk to young people about religion: "It's something you need in America—but we are Jews without it."

There have been a number of "spiritual buds" like Dmiel's group in Israel, but they seem to wither away after one or two years. Some organization that would stimulate and coordinate their efforts might be able, however, eventually to produce something more lasting from these experiments.

Jerusalem: What of the religious feelings of the Orientals, who now make up about half of the population? Although often lumped together by the visitor to Israel and even by the Israeli, there are vast cultural and religious differences among them. The immigrants from North Africa, for example, are usually more superstitious than religious. The Yemenites, on the other hand, bring with them simple but profoundly sensitive religious feelings.

Israel Yeshiayahu, a Knesset member and a Yemenite, has been very helpful in explaining the feelings of his community to me. He himself was quite shocked one Yom Kippur eve to see a group of young people lolling near the doors of a synagogue in short pants and ostentatiously munching food. "The tragedy is that religion for the sabra is associated almost exclusively with the antics of the Neturei Karta [the extreme Orthodox], with religious politics, the evasion of military duty—with behavior that he not only doesn't respect but actively dislikes."

It was different with the Yemenite, who even when he breaks away from religion still has love and respect for the traditions of his family. The Yemenite, explained Yeshiayahu, may ask strict observance of himself, but is tolerant of others, and consequently the children feel less of a yoke in their homes and synagogue. And like all the Jews from the East, they are terribly eager to be "modern." Were the Yemenites to be presented with a religious tradition which could be considered modern, Yeshiayahu felt they would be attracted.

Yesterday I spent a full day at a meeting of Yemenite workers of the Mapai party in Tel Aviv. Yeshiayahu was the chairman of an afternoon session devoted to the sensitive problem of social discrimination. By skillful questioning, he led those with complaints about discrimination to admit that in most cases the "discrimination" was the result either of the lower educational level of the Yemenite or the unavoidable sensitivity of a minority group.

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One man stood up to complain to me that the directors of the educational program did not understand the kind of approach that could be successful with Yemenites. "They come and want us to learn mathematics and tell us how important it is for business and the atom bomb. That isn't the way to appeal to the Yemenite. If they want the Yemenite to study mathematics or to send his son to study it, they should not tell him that mathematics will help him build a bridge, but that it will help him to calculate the coming of the new moon so that he can say his prayers at the proper time."

In the evening, Shoshanna Damari, the celebrated Yemenite folk-singer, appeared in a low-cut dress, to the embarrassment of many of the older generation, who tried to avoid looking at her throughout the performance. Scattered throughout the audience were Yemenites who wore beards and hats as signs of their faith. Very few of the younger generation imitated them, but it was obvious that even if they regarded their parents as somewhat outdated, there was no tension or dislike; rather a great deal of respect and affection. There were probably no Yemenites to be found on either side of the fighting going on in Jerusalem about the controversial club house that Histadrut had built near the Orthodox quarter.

Tel Aviv: A taxi driver this morning told me how he and his friend had blackened an Arab's eye yesterday. "You mustn't let them lift their heads," he had said. "You've got to keep them afraid of you." This came only a short while after telling me that he and his friends were "traditional" and went to the synagogue on occasion.

Of course, the cab driver felt no connection between his "traditionalism" and his attitude toward the Arabs. That seems to be the general feeling, and not even the religionists suggest that there is a connection between the body of Jewish religious "wisdom" and matters like the black market, Kibya, or the Arabs. But with what is religion concerned, if not with this kind of problem? All these years the injunction to love the stranger has constituted a rather academic challenge to Jews, because they themselves were always the stranger. But now there is a stranger in their midst. You see him walking in isolated groups of two or three down the streets of Tel Aviv, or standing silently in the bus queues, and you see that the Arab feels himself to be a "stranger." The fact that he actually enjoys more civic and social rights, and better economic standards, in Israel than in Arab countries does not change the fact that he has the "heart of a stranger."

The problem is to reconcile the security problem represented by the Arab with the ethical demands of Judaism. It is a difficult problem, but doesn't the real test of any ethical and religious commandment occur when an individual or a people has the power to transgress it—power which in certain respects Jews have now for the first time in two millennia?

My survey of the possibility of establishing liberal Judaism in Israel seems to be turning upon itself and chafing for answers to more important questions than that of "liberal" versus "orthodox"—the question of religion itself, and its relevance in a land which has time only for the necessary and relevant.

[*The second, concluding part of this article will follow.*]

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HAIMAN PHILIP SPITZ: PIONEER MAINE MERCHANT

An Autobiography

ON THE thirteenth day of April, 1816—in the Hebrew calendar, the ninth day of Nesan—Ernestine, daughter of Philip Lichtenstine, gave to her husband, the merchant Abraham Spitz, her first-born son; they named the child Haiman Philip Spitz. . . .

In 1834, my second sister, Rosa, married a gentleman named M. Levy. In that year I left Posen for Bromberg, in Prussia, took a place in a dry goods store, remained one year, and then went home again. I arrived in Posen in the month of April, before Easter, to be with my parents and brothers and sisters during the holidays. In June, 1835, I left home for England, arrived in London in September, took a situation in a French bazaar, with a small salary, not knowing the English language, which was hard in the beginning. I tried to learn, to better my condition, in which I succeeded.

The next year my firm sent me out as a "commercial traveler"—so-called in England. I worked hard and faithfully, and succeeded in getting good customers. My sales improving year after year, my salary was raised ac-

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"LIKE some American Jewish worthies," writes Jacob R. Marcus, Adolph S. Ochs Professor of American History at Hebrew Union College, "Haiman Philip Spitz came to America via England. He left his native Posen, where he was born in 1816, and lived for five years in England. . . . He was twenty-four . . . [when he] landed in New York.

"Spitz's memoirs help us to gauge the beginnings of the participation of the Jews in the garment industry. In the middle 1840's he was manufacturing clothing in the North for Southern markets.

"For a while he lived in New Orleans and, like many others in that city, was belligerently desirous of hastening the conquest of Mexico, documenting his bellicose sentiments by fighting in the army of General Zachary Taylor. After the Mexican War he moved to Bangor, Maine, where he remained for about a decade, until the panic of 1856-57 crippled the lumber business and compelled him to seek greener fields.

"Wandering about, always looking for larger opportunities to support his ever-increasing family, he found himself in 1859 in Baltimore, where he lived for a generation, before joining his children in San Francisco. While in the Maryland city, he engaged in the wholesale liquor and cigar trade, and when the Civil War broke out in 1861, he sold hats, caps, boots, and other clothing and garment supplies to the army. That type of business was not new to him; in 1845, the year before the war with Mexico, he had sold to the government summer suits for soldiers, at $6 apiece.

"Spitz was interested in Judaism. It was in his house in Bangor that the first synagogue in Maine was called into existence—in 1849, not 1852, as he erroneously wrote in his reminiscences. In post-bellum Baltimore he was, apparently, active in the congregation of Rabbi Benjamin Szold. Jewish traditions and ceremonies were observed in his home. At the Seder, the Passover feast, in his home in San Francisco in 1883, he sat at the head of the table and could smile upon his wife, seven children, six grandchildren, two sons-in-law, and others.

"Spitz died some time after 1886, the year in which he finished writing *Haiman Philip Spitz, An Autobiography.*"

The present extracts from Spitz's autobiography are taken from Volume I of *Memoirs of American Jews,* a three-volume collection edited by Dr. Marcus, to be published by the Jewish Publication Society of America, with whose permission we reprint them. The first two volumes of this work are to appear shortly. Last month we published excerpts from the autobiography of Raphael J. Moses, "Major Raphael J. Moses of Georgia," taken from the same source.—ED.

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cordingly. After working several years with that house, and having saved some money, I concluded to go into business for myself, and established [settled] in Bath, England.

My brother, Peter, arrived in London; he came to work for me. I traveled to solicit trade and gain customers; my brother remained at home to attend to the orders. Finding that my brother was not the proper man for the place, we did not stay long together. I concluded to sell out my business to Mr. Joseph Samuel[s], of Bath. My brother having a desire to go to America, but not having the means necessary, I furnished him the passage money and $250 besides; my brother was a furrier. Then he and a gentleman named M. Marks, who was a capmaker, and who was worth $250, formed a partnership and left together for America in 1839, and I [went] home. . . .

I ASSISTED the old folks, to make them comfortable. I went in the grain and wool business with my father, remained a few years with them at home, left the business with my father and started for England, June, 1840, arrived in London from Hamburg in July, went to Bath to settle up my business with Mr. Samuels, went from there to Birmingham, then to Liverpool, where I took the sailing ship "North Carolina" for New York, [and] arrived in New York on August 3d, 1840. . . .

. . . I had no liking for New York, and made up my mind to go to New Orleans. My brother paid me the money which I loaned him in Liverpool, England. I purchased goods in New York—caps from the firm of Spitz & Marks; sent the goods by a sailing vessel to New Orleans. At that time we had no steamers on that road. A few days afterward I went on board of the ship, accompanied by my brother and Mr. Marks. I looked around the ship and found a very rough crowd, cursing and swearing. I felt I must go, having paid my money; but I felt I ought to stay when my brother bid me goodbye. I went with them as far as the shore. My brother said: "Rush back; the ship will go in ten minutes." "Let it go," I said. He said again: "Go." I turned around to go on board. "Good-bye!" my brother called. I turned again from the ship toward my brother, and said: "By the help of God, I will not go with that ship," and went home with him, losing my passage money.

A week after, I left New York for New Orleans. I arrived at that place, after a passage of thirty-two days, on September 25th, 1840. I found the place deserted, and the yellow fever raging and a good many people dying; black crape on so many doors, which I had never seen before, that really I got frightened. It looked very discouraging. A week after my arrival I asked about that ship—when it would arrive. To my horror I read in the paper that the ship was lost, and with it the captain, the crew, and over 100 passengers. It was a total wreck. I was very sorry for them, and thanked the Almighty for saving me.

A few weeks after my arrival the yellow fever checked, and a great many people commenced to arrive in the city from the East and the West. Everything began to look lively, and business was good. I took a stand in the market with those goods I brought from New York. I did a good business. Expenses of living were very high: $5 a day in a sailors' boardinghouse, and other houses, which were not fit to live in. Hotels rated high, and in private houses you were not safe. . . .

Things began to look satisfactory with me; I had good health and plenty of business. A man who came with me from New York (the father of five children) was taken sick in his boardinghouse, and was sent to the hospital. The next day I went to the hospital to inquire after his health and, to my great surprise, was told that he died that morning of yellow fever. I felt very sorry for him. I was also told that if I wanted his body, to do me a favor it would be given to me if I pay expenses; if not, it would be given to the doctors [for dissection]. I went to several of my countrymen, got the sum together, handed it to the man at the hospital, got the body, and had it buried in a Jewish burying ground.

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A few days after this his wife, with two children, arrived, looking for her husband, but could not find him. She was told to go and see me. She came to my place of business, asked me what had become of her husband, whether he was dead or among the living. Seeing the situation of the poor woman, who was half crazy, I told her that he had gone into the country to peddle and would be back in a few weeks. I asked her: "Where are your children?" "On the ship," she said. "What made you come out so quickly?" She answered: "I cannot live without him." I went with her to the ship, got the children and her baggage, and took them to a boardinghouse. A week after, I told her that I had received a letter from her husband at Mobile, Ala., that he would go from there to New York. The poor woman believed all that! I showed her a bogus letter. I believed she would be better off in New York, and my object was to induce her to go there. She was anxious to go back. I engaged berths, paid for them, and gave her some money, which I told her I would charge to her husband. They arrived in New York. When there she found out her husband had died of yellow fever at the hospital. She wrote to me to let her know all the particulars, which I answered, and sent her the death certificate; also, in what Jewish burying ground he was buried, and the name of the congregation. It was no encouragement for me to like New Orleans—such a sickly place.

I ATTENDED to my market business, in company with a man of my age, born in the same place, in Posen; his name was J. Spiro. He was in the grocery business; I with Yankee notions. We had a small room rented, where we slept. Our market business commenced at five o'clock A.M., and closed at 1:00 P.M. The balance of the day I went peddling, making a little money. Thinking I could not make enough money to go East and back again (I had to go East for my goods, but my partner bought his groceries in New Orleans), I concluded to go to the country and peddle, to make more money. Besides, I did not like city life in the style in which it was conducted at that time—too much fun and devilment for me. So we parted. My partner left New Orleans for Rio de Janeiro, and I went by steamer with my goods to Natchez, Miss., bought a horse, and traveled the country—through Mississippi and Louisiana—and sold a good many goods. I have never heard of my partner to the present day.

The hardships in that country at that time were many, the country roads were bad, and we had to stand a good deal; the sales were small, but the profits were large; the people were economical, and there was not as much money in 1841 in this country as there is at the present day.

IN APRIL, 1841, I left New Orleans for New York, took with me $2,000, bought goods at auction and in several other houses, mostly for cash—a few on credit—some ready-made clothing and caps of the firm of Spitz & Marks.

September, 1841, I left New York and returned to New Orleans and sold my goods at good profit. In that year my brother Peter married in New York, dissolved partnership, and moved to Boston.

May, 1842, I left New Orleans again for New York. My capital having increased, I bought more goods, went to Boston to see my brother and his wife. He had established himself in the cap business. I gave up my fancy business, went to New York, and commenced making up clothing for the southern market. I bought some tailors' trimmings for tailors, and left for New Orleans, where I sold my goods. I continued in this business, going every year to New York to make up clothing for the South.

In 1845, business was remarkably good, and I had to order goods to be sent to me. At that time war broke out with Mexico, through the influence of a certain gentleman [John Slidell?] with whom I was acquainted, and what we called the "Filibusters." I was a member of that society. Its aim was to bring on a war with Mexico. It was a secret society, composed of Americans. . . . I

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belonged to a military company called the "Harrison Grays."

One day the steamer "Galveston" arrived from Texas with the news that American blood had been spilt on American soil by Mexicans this side of Fort Brown, and that our country was in danger. They commenced drafting. All the city military companies were called out—our company among them—by General [Persifor F.] Smith. Speeches were made by several soldiers, and the question asked if all the companies present would volunteer to start with the steamer "Galveston" to Galveston, Texas, to the seat of war. To which we all said, "Yes," except two Spanish companies; they refused to fight against Mexico. Their swords were taken from them, and they were disbanded by order of General Smith. All the rest of the companies were sworn in and equipped. We put ribbons on our caps as volunteers, and with a band of music, marched through the streets to get more volunteers, in which we succeeded. We certainly were the cream of the city—merchants, doctors, lawyers, judges, mechanics. We marched down to the wharf to go on the steamer, greeted by the people all the way. We arrived in Galveston, and were put under General [Zachary] Taylor's command. Our company was sent out to watch bridges and reconnoiter.

We were not in any battles, except at Cerro Gordo and Resaca de la Palma [Palo Alto?], where Major [Samuel] Ringgold, from Baltimore, was killed. After that we were again sent to watch bridges. We had hard times. Several of our company were wounded by the Mexicans. We stole from the farmers all we could find and left them nothing. We had good times, plenty to eat, and we wasted the rest.

During that time they were drafting in New Orleans and bounties given. Men were coming in large numbers from all parts of the United States. We were discharged and sent back to New Orleans. When we arrived the governor, mayor, city officials, and the citizens showed us great honor, for we were the first when our country was in danger. . . .

A few weeks after that I left New Orleans for New York. I went to Boston to see my brother, and while there looked around the city to find some business to settle in. I concluded to go in business with my brother Peter, the firm to be Spitz & Brother, wholesale and retail clothiers. We located on Hanover Street, with a branch house at New Orleans, which I was to attend to. The manufactory was in Boston under the management of my brother. He was married, while I was still single at that time, although four years older than he. He was active, and paid strict attention to business; I, also, to my branch, and everything went on satisfactory for a year or so. Here a mistake was made by my brother. . . .

A man came to my brother with the sheriff and asked him to go bail for him or else he would be ruined, at the [same] time crying bitterly. Brother knew the man, and believed what he said to be true; that his partner ran away and took all the money with him, and that he was arrested. My brother being young, honest, and inexperienced, gave bail for him. He did not let me know, for I certainly would have refused, a mistake which he afterward found out to his sorrow. We owed the merchants with whom we were dealing, and they believed we were swindlers, also, on account of our bailing that man; so they attached the store in Boston, and also my business in New Orleans. I released my part of the indebtedness for one-half cash and notes for the balance, with my brother's endorsement. . . .

In 1846, we gave up our southern trade, and I returned to Boston. I settled our affairs with our creditors, continued the retail trade in Boston, and everything went on well again under my management. We had a good city and country trade.

On February 3d, 1847, I married in Boston, and ten months after, my wife gave birth to a son. We named him Samuel. He died when eleven months old and was buried in Boston, in 1848. After the death of my boy, which I took very hard, I became discouraged, and not seeing a good prospect for business, we dissolved partnership.

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I LEFT Boston and went to Bangor, Maine, took a store on the Kenduskeag bridge, and again commenced the clothing business. In the beginning it was dull. The people there did not encourage newcomers until they became acquainted. It was an English custom. They generally asked to what church you belonged; they would patronize church members. It was a poor chance for me, being an Israelite. I found out I would have to become acquainted in order to make a living. I liked the place and the style of the people; so I tried to make friends. Being a Mason, I visited lodges; joined the Odd Fellows and other societies, and became a citizen of the United States; I became acquainted with their style.

My wife having been raised in this country, she made many friends; we were respected by those with whom we had dealings, my business improved, and we were perfectly satisfied with our surroundings. There were six Jewish families in Bangor: one kept a clothing store, two kept dry goods stores, and the others peddled. We visited our neighbors and places of amusement; we visited American families, and they visited us, and we were much liked. It was our spring of life, which we spent to our satisfaction.

In Bangor we found the people with whom we associated to be of a fine order. Myself and wife were happy and prosperous. I bought a fine house, formerly owned by a Mr. Jordan; it contained all the modern improvements, with a stable in the rear. . . .

In 1852 a congregation was established in Bangor. Mr. [Moses] Silber was president; H. P. Spitz [myself], vice president.

In 1856 and 1857 business became very dull; a panic prevailed all over the United States. Maine was a great sufferer, as nearly the whole trade was lumbering, which was entirely stopped. I kept a wholesale and retail clothing store and furnished the lumbermen with their outfit when going to, and returning from, the woods. As this trade was lost to me, and having a large family to support, I contented myself with the retail trade; but business getting worse and worse, and no prospect of it getting better, I concluded to break up business and leave Bangor with my family and go to Boston. We arrived there in 1858.

I TOOK a house on Shawmut Avenue, and a loft on Milk Street, and sold liquors and cigars, at wholesale and retail. My trade was good; but Massachusetts passed a liquor law, making liquors contraband, and all such debts could not be collected by law. . . .

I collected all I could and left for the West. I took my eldest daughter on a visit to my sister, in Hartford, Connecticut. The child did not want to stay; took her with me to New York, Philadelphia, and Baltimore; left her with some relatives in Baltimore, and went to Cincinnati and several other places to find a place to settle in.

I could not be suited, so I went back to Baltimore, and after looking around for a week, found a house and store on Lexington Market; a four-story brick building with a store, a fine cellar, and a splendid yard; a suitable place for the business which I intended carrying on—a cellar large enough to hold 100 barrels of whisky. I went to the landlord, took a lease of the house and store for one year, with the privilege of three years more; took the keys, and was happy to think it would be a good place for business. I left my daughter in Baltimore and went to Boston to bring my family.

On arriving in Boston, I found my wife sick in bed, but my five children in good health. Imagine, dear children, how I felt—ready to start but having a sick wife on hand. My wife and children were all to me, and for their sakes I worked—looked out for their comfort and education. Although a merchant with limited capital, I managed just as well as any rich merchant. . . . I spent a good deal of money to have my daughters accomplished and my sons educated, so that they would be able to go into any branch of trade in which I had succeeded that might be offered to them. I always was in moderate circumstances; could always make as much as we needed, and even something more. . . .

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I was waiting until my wife got better to go to Baltimore. I wrote to the landlord to be excused for not coming, giving my reason, and stated that we would come as soon as she was better. In answer to this he said he would rent the house if I did not send him three months' rent in advance. I sent him the money, and he sent me a receipt. My wife getting better, I was a happy man again. We made arrangements to leave. We had the furniture, pictures, and all the household goods packed, and with my liquors and cigars, they were shipped by steamer to Baltimore. Mother, five children, and myself went also by steamer. Our passage by rail would have been much cheaper, but thinking it would be much better for our health, it being in July, to take a sea voyage, as they would become more acclimated upon arriving at Baltimore. . . .

It was very hard for us to break up home and business in Boston, and part from brothers and sisters and friends; but such is life. We cannot have what we wish; only that which is ordained for us. When in Bangor, I had a photograph taken of the birthplace of our six children and of ourselves, of which they were very fond. . . .

On July 22d, 1859, we arrived in Baltimore with six children; our eldest daughter, seven years old, and our youngest son, Jacob, fifteen months. I opened a wholesale liquor and cigar store. When our piano, furniture, and household goods arrived, which were many, we moved into our house. For our passage, stock, and furniture I paid $658.40. We had a nice yard for the children to play in. . . .

In the beginning my business was not as good as it should have been. I could not make a living or cover my expenses. I did not want to lose what little I had, so I concluded to try to get a situation which would enable me to attend to my own business at the same time I attended to another's. Such a situation I would have accepted. I visited the Masons' lodge, got acquainted with several brothers, told them my situation, and gave them references in Bangor; told them I was able to be a bookkeeper, or an assistant, or a salesman; would like to have a situation from 9:00 A.M. to 4:00 P.M.; and that I was willing to work. Two weeks after that a gentleman got me a situation to my wishes; it was to be assistant bookkeeper in a commission house, with a salary of $75 per month, and time from 9:00 A.M. to 4:00 P.M. . . .

During my absence my clerk received orders, and when at home I attended to it myself. The first year, with my salary and hard work—attending two places of business—I made my expenses. The second year my trade improved, and I was obliged to give up my situation. My employers were glad that my business was improving. They sent me to a tailor to have a fine suit of clothes and an overcoat made for myself, as a present for faithful services, for which I thanked them. I left them in January, 1860. The war broke out. One partner [in the business I just left] was a Rebel; the other a Union man. They broke up business and retired. The Union man left the books and business under my charge to close. For salary I was to receive a percentage of all the money I collected. . . .

War had been declared; soldiers were gathering in all parts of the United States to go to the seat of war (Washington), then to Virginia. The first regiment (the Sixth Massachusetts) arrived in the city of Baltimore. The citizens tried to prevent their landing and in doing so killed several soldiers. The people became terribly excited and rushed to the armories and took possession of all the arms. The bridges in the city were burned down by orders of Mayor Brown and Marshal Kane. The city was in a horrible condition; nothing could get in or out; business was entirely stopped; no work for mechanics or laborers; the poor were in great distress. . . .

The Union people had to keep still; all had to pretend to be Rebels. In order to be treated right in school our children were obliged to carry Rebel emblems. Afterwhile things began to look a little better, although hurrahing for Jeff Davis was heard everywhere. Our city was very hard to get

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through; but after a good many reinforcements had been to Washington by water, it became better regulated, and the bridges were rebuilt. The mayor, the marshal, and a great many Rebel citizens were arrested; martial law was declared; people began to breathe more freely; soldiers in great numbers were arriving day and night, and business began to improve. I put up a place at the Washington depot, on the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, and opened a liquor and cigar store to supply passengers and soldiers, which proved to be a success. I still continued my other store, which I attended myself, while I employed a man to take charge of the one at the depot. But the government passed a law forbidding the soldiers to buy liquor and the merchants to sell it, as it was reported that it had been poisoned.

After taking the liquors out, so that I would be free from the law, I sold the place to a Mr. Morris, from Virginia; he had lost all he had except $6,000. He sold groceries. I gave him the lease of the house and store; his wife and son kept it, did a good business, and made money. Two years after he got sick and died, leaving a wife and eight children. The son who had charge of the business left it and went South, taking the money with him, which he spent in helping the Rebel cause. The woman sold her business. She lost nearly all she had, and had seven children to take care of. Myself and several gentlemen with whom she dealt helped to support her. She had property in Richmond, and after that place had been taken by the Union Army she went back with her family. . . .

My business then was good, although many restrictions were placed upon merchants in selling goods. I had lost some money before the war commenced. One day a Southern man came into my store and handed me $250 which had been sent to me by a gentleman living in South Carolina; he had been a school friend of mine in Europe. I sold him goods in Baltimore. . . .

A society was formed called "The Minute Men" to protect the city when in danger, of which I was a member. Several patriotic gentlemen of wealth sent me to army headquarters, near Richmond, with some goods for our officers and soldiers. Then I received a commission from the government and went to Norfolk, and from there to the White House, where I received some papers to go further. I went to Camp Lincoln, four miles from Richmond; arriving there, I delivered my papers to the provost marshal, General Porter; I was introduced to General McClellan and officers; disposed of the goods, and sent for more. This was on the Chickahominy River. The goods which I had were Kossuth hats, military caps, boots, underwear, and blue sacks, with U. S. buttons; also, shoulder-straps for generals, colonels, majors, captains, and lieutenants. . . .

I left . . . for Baltimore, where I arrived July 5th, 1862, still sick; it was nearly a year before I got well. I had contracted a Chickahominy River fever. I was not able to get back to the seat of war again, so remained at home and attended to my business, and managed to get along very well. Business commenced to be good all over the Union. I speculated in whisky and had bought a large stock, when the government raised the tax on all liquors. My health improved, and I enjoyed myself with my family. In 1863, my health was restored; my two daughters were in the high school, and my sons were advancing in their studies. I felt proud to know that my boys would be able to fill any situation that might be offered to them. Things went on very well in my domestic and business relations; my children were growing up to my heart's desire, and we were all blessed with good health. Our children had great desire to study, which pleased us.

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IS THERE A MIDDLE WAY IN CULTURE?

Clifton Fadiman and the Middlebrow

RICHARD CHASE

EVERYONE seems to agree that American culture has always been marked by striking differences, even outright contradictions, of taste and opinion. A common response to this split between what may provisionally be called high culture and low culture has been to view it with alarm and to advocate a middle ground in which contradictions might be reconciled.

The only opposition to the ideal of a middle culture has come in periods when there was a more or less coherent advance guard or intransigent intelligentsia which criticized culture radically. At present there is no concerted opposition, and this is the era of the triumphant middle. The fact remains, however, that a middle way can be established only by losing contact with certain of the basic realities of our civilization.

The question is interestingly raised by Mr. Clifton Fadiman in his *Party of One*. To be sure, Mr. Fadiman does not pretend to be a profound analyst of society or art. But he seems certain that as a "middleman" whose function it is "to mediate" between cultural opposites, he is on the side of the angels. His book has been widely praised. And it must be admitted, furthermore, that his diagnosis of our culture places him in company much more formidable than the book reviewers who have been giving him their approval.

In *Democracy in America* Tocqueville tried to account for a number of related contradictions in American life. He noted a disparity between ideals and practice, a lack of connection between thought and experience, a tendency of the American mind to oscillate rather wildly between ideas that "are all either extremely minute and clear or extremely general and vague."

Tocqueville sought a genetic explanation for these disparities. He pointed out that in aristocratic societies there was a shared body of inherited habits, attitudes, and institutions that stood in a mediating position between the individual and the state. This, he observed, was not true in a democracy, where "each citizen is habitually engaged in the contemplation of a very puny object: namely, himself. If he ever looks higher, he perceives only the immense form of society at large or the still more imposing aspect of mankind. . . . What lies between is a void." Tocqueville believed that this either/or habit of mind also owed much to the sharp distinctions made by Calvinism and its habit of opposing the individual to his God, with a minimum of mythic or ecclesiastical mediation. He found certain advantages in this "democratic" quality of mind, but he warned Americans that it might well produce great confusion in philosophy, morals, and politics, and a basic instability in literary and cultural values, and that consequently Americans should try to discover democratic equivalents

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THE celebrated "Middle Way" of American and British democracy, which most of us agree has worked so well in politics, is not, RICHARD CHASE contends here in his examination of a recently published anthology of Clifton Fadiman's writings, *Party of One* (World, 473 pp., $5.00), necessarily the right way in culture and literature. "Middlebrowism," which Mr. Fadiman defends and exemplifies in his work, is a powerful force affecting the basic quality of American civilization today, but has gone virtually unstudied. Born in New Hampshire in 1914, Mr. Chase is assistant professor of English at Columbia and the author of books on Herman Melville and Emily Dickinson. His most recent contribution to COMMENTARY was "Walt Whitman as American Spokesman" in March 1955. He is teaching this summer at the Indiana School of Letters at Bloomington.

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for those traditional habits of mind which in aristocracies had moderated and reconciled extremes in thought and experience.

Tocqueville knew, of course, that the either/or kind of thought of which he spoke was specifically American only in the peculiar quality of its origin and expression. He saw that with the probable exception of England, Europe would characteristically concern itself during the 19th century with grand intellectual oppositions, always more or less of a Hegelian order. But even though the tendency of thought Tocqueville predicated belonged to Western culture generally, one is nevertheless struck by how often American writers conceive of human dilemmas according to his scheme, and how many make aesthetic capital out of what seemed to him a moral and intellectual shortcoming.

Thus we have Hawthorne's interest in the individual who becomes alienated from man and nature through spiritual pride or the unscrupulous abstractions of his intellect. We have Melville's Ahab, who is "damned most malignantly" because he has "the high perception" but lacks "the low enjoying power." We have Whitman, whose vision of things, when it is not merely "mystic," consists of a sustained tension of opposites, and who says that the soul has "measureless sympathy" and "measureless pride" but that in poetry, whose "inmost secrets sleep with the twain," the "one balances the other." And do we not see something American in T. S. Eliot's idea that since the 17th century the Western mind has been characterized by a "dissociation of sensibility," a split between intellect and feeling?

In his *Studies in Classic American Literature* D. H. Lawrence presented his version of the contrariety or, as he said, "duplicity" of the American literary mind by saying that he found in the American writers "a tight mental allegiance to a morality which all their passion goes to destroy." He was thinking of an inherent conflict between "genteel" Puritan spirituality and a pragmatic experientialism which in its lower depths was sheer Dionysian, or "Indian," energy and violence. Acute enough to see that the best American artistic achievements had depended in one way or another on this dualism, he seemed ready nevertheless to advocate, on moral grounds, a reconciliation of opposites.

Finally, there is the division of American culture into "highbrow" and "lowbrow" made by Van Wyck Brooks in 1915 in his *America's Coming-of-Age*. As will be seen in a moment, Mr. Brooks leads us back to Mr. Fadiman, since Mr. Fadiman purports to work in that cultural middle ground where Brooks hoped to establish a moderating, "organic" intelligence and imagination.

But first, one had better admit the limited, the merely instrumental value of Brooks's terms. And it will be well to attempt a brief and necessarily inadequate clarification of these terms, feeling as one must that, like many discussions of this kind, Brooks's essay is rich in analogies but poor in definitions. A "highbrow," then, is a man with an ideal of disinterested intelligence who makes strong demands on our powers of attention, reason, sensibility, and seriousness. A "lowbrow" is a man whose sense of things has been formed by the give and take of life, and whose ideas come from inherited folk wisdom, folk art, or folk prejudice, or from the myths conveyed to him by the mass media or by the lodge, legion, or union to which he belongs. The "middlebrow" is by nature indefinable except in terms of other things that *can* be defined. He puts on a protective coloration under which we see the attempt to resist definition by foregoing all the hazards of a highbrow or lowbrow view. The protective coloration suggests a general benignity, powerlessness, and belief in moderation, an attitude of being bewildered by what other people claim to understand, a belief in the virtue of gentle, wistful humor.

Needless to say, there are good and bad ways of being a highbrow or a lowbrow, the characteristic flaw of the former being sterility and of the latter Know Nothingism. It is also possible to be an admirable middle-

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brow, since even a basically non-committal view of things is capable, by a great intellectual effort, of profound articulation and refinement.

But three questions confront us when we hear the plea for a cultural middlebrowism in America. First, how does it manifest itself? Second, what characteristic weaknesses is it subject to? And, third, how does it relate to our own greatest writers?

PARTY OF ONE is a collection of Mr. Fadiman's writings, including book reviews, short essays, notes, aphorisms, and introductions to books. Belonging among the middlebrows, Mr. Fadiman nevertheless loves Henry James, has struggled (unsuccessfully, he says) to understand Faulkner, and is aware of Allen Tate, T. S. Eliot, and the literary criticism that goes on in the advanced quarterlies and in the universities. Thus he is able, as he disarmingly says, "to sell . . . at marked-down figures" some of the highbrows' ideas to his fellow middlebrows. Furthermore, being of a critical bent, he is able to warn middlebrows when they are in danger of becoming lowbrows. The "middleman," he says, "mediates between a formed body of thought and a rather formless, shifting body of readers. It is not only that he assuages the mental hungers of a group that feels alienated or even repelled by more difficult material, such as most modern poetry, philosophy, criticism, and even certain kinds of vanguard fiction. It is also that he acts as a solid floor preventing too many members of this group from falling into the cellar of the comics and the soap opera."

Mr. Fadiman also describes himself as a "pitchman-professor." When he offers writers to us, his pitch is customarily a package deal, including writers who operate on markedly different levels of seriousness. Thus we get very dissimilar pieces of merchandise in the same package, as when he refers to "our most probing literature, from Henry Thoreau to John Marquand," or when he offers, as examples of *causerie* criticism at its best, "Edmund Wilson or Gilbert Highet or John Mason Brown." Mr. Fadiman calls himself a "professor" because, as he says, the Walter Mitty in him has always wanted to be one. And indeed he is a considerable pedagogue and didact, even though he tries hard to teach nothing but a sort of mild wisdom and to demolish no enemy but "dullness."

Mr. Fadiman is usually competent and often sharp in his pieces on Sinclair Lewis, *Huckleberry Finn, Moby Dick,* Ambrose Bierce, Henry James, *War and Peace,* and particularly on *Pickwick* and Dickens. Many of the brief pieces containing confessions, memories, and analytic comment concerning the radio, TV, and theatrical world seem freshly observed. There is a number of short studies of children's reading, and at the end of the book, a group of sketches, parodies, and humorous pieces. There is also Mr. Fadiman's most ambitious piece of historical analysis, an essay called "The Decline of Attention," in which he accepts with exemplary geniality and fatalism the prospect of the end of the long humanist era when people were accustomed to read books.

In Mr. Fadiman middlebrowism has become highly self-conscious. He instinctively exemplifies its current opinions, but unlike most of the reviewers, literary journalists, professors, and airwave *causeurs* whose opinions he shares, he always tries to be aware of his position. Instead of just irritably assaulting all advance-guard writers, as most of his colleagues do, he feels not only that he can learn from them but that he must justify himself at the same time that he disapproves of them and, occasionally, sarcastically jibes at them. For Mr. Fadiman knows that the complacent middling segments of taste and opinion are dependent on more uncompromising spirits and that a good deal of what the middlebrow believes today is what he assailed the highbrow for believing ten or twenty years ago (e.g., that Henry James and Melville are important writers).

WHAT are the current middlebrow opinions? To begin at random, and with no hope of giving a complete answer, there

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is Mr. Fadiman's belief that the *New Yorker* is "one of the best magazines ever published in the English language." I disagree with this a little reluctantly, since I remember the time when I agreed with it and took Mr. Fadiman's weekly book reviews in the *New Yorker* as the last word in literary criticism. Then there is the belief that Charles Addams is somehow a significant artist, Rodgers and Hammerstein significant theatrical figures, Ogden Nash and Dorothy Parker significant poets, and E. B. White a significant philosopher and moralist. We note that the middlebrow is never content to assert that these people are amusing; he always insists that in some unexplained way they are more serious than the serious writers, more serious, for example, than Shakespeare, who is not so much serious as "solemn" and "pretentious." Mr. Fadiman himself does not say this about Shakespeare, but it seems somehow involved in his idea that with one or two exceptions the dire and scintillating figures of the Italian Renaissance were "feeble bores."

Then there is the belief that, as Mr. Fadiman says, the familiar and discursive essay ought to be revived. Is it out of some hidden perversity that middlebrow critics are always thinking up impossible tasks for literature to perform? The familiar and discursive essay is one of the most difficult and chancy of literary forms, and it has seldom been successful except when it momentarily had, for example, the rank naturalism of Montaigne or the virile republicanism of Hazlitt. Mr. Fadiman appears to believe that Christopher Morley and E. B. White are modern Montaignes, although, as it seems to me, these writers are merely morose, inverted, and arch. Mr. White's Manhattanized Thoreauism is surely one of the cultural disasters of our time. If Cesare Borgia is a "feeble bore," is Mr. White a brilliant personality?

Mr. Fadiman also wants to revive the "obsolescent art of conversation," an art supposed by middlebrows to have flourished in the 18th century and to have been in decline ever since. He even conducts a TV program in order to promote the idea of "civilized, noncontroversial, discursive, nonpatronizing talk." I believe this is also a lost cause, most people nowadays preferring forms of communication that are more interesting than "conversation"—such as heart-to-heart palavers, arguments, jokes, gossip, and, if necessary, insults or declarations of love.

In keeping with his emulation of Montaigne, whose destiny it also was to mediate between high culture and the lowliest feelings of men, but who made it a great destiny, Mr. Fadiman believes that the ego of the writer is the writer's proper subject. But how can the writer write about his ego if his assumption is that he doesn't have one? On the first page of *Party of One* we find a veritable *tour de force* of self-depreciation, during the course of which the author describes himself as not wishing "to boast," as "sheepish," "baffled," "inept," and as a "low-level philosopher" and "ordinary man." Later we hear that he is a "quietist," "a rabbity type," "unimpressive," "cringing," "wistful," and so on. It may be noteworthy, if it is not merely accidental, that the stories of Henry James Mr. Fadiman discusses in this book are about "rabbity types," Catherine Sloper of *Washington Square* and Marcher of *The Beast in the Jungle*. Because he often deals with mild persons who "miss out" or who renounce the hazards of life, James is one of the highbrow writers to whom the middlebrow most easily reconciles himself. It is possible, in other words, to think of James as a kind of superior James Thurber, as Thurber himself (an expert parodist of James) apparently does.

It must be said in behalf of Mr. Fadiman, however, that although he avoids the weirder forms of egotism sometimes displayed by highbrows, he is not really half so "sheepish" as he claims to be. There are other creatures in his pasture besides sheep and other beasts in his jungle besides rabbits. In his introduction to *Huckleberry Finn*, Mr. Fadiman states that "we have a deep hankering for the forest, the river, the rifle out of which this country came." The heroes of the

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frontier, however, used to describe themselves as "half horse, half alligator," not as half sheep and half rabbit. And Mark Twain's pitch to the public was a vividly contradictory and self-assertive ego. I don't know how the country came out of the rifle.

Let us return to the theoretical preoccupations with which we began. In *America's Coming-of-Age* Brooks presented an account of the split between intelligence and experience, spirituality and realism, that runs through our history, beginning with two contemporaries, Jonathan Edwards (the highbrow) and Franklin (the lowbrow). Brooks was worried by this split. He made some acute comments on the desiccation and over-refinement of the highbrow who had intelligence but was unable to bring it to bear on experience. He pointed out the tendency of the lowbrow to be resourceful, pragmatic, and passionate, but also irreconcilably hostile to intellect. At the time Brooks wrote, Woodrow Wilson and William Jennings Bryan were handy symbols of the opposition (as today Dr. J. Robert Oppenheimer and Senator McCarthy are). To remedy the situation, Brooks proposed a new intelligentsia, a new group of dedicated spirits who, mediating between separated segments of our culture, would establish a middle way which would deal with our forms of cultural confusion, alienation, and discontinuity by absorbing them into an "organic" whole.

There is no doubt that in the realm of politics, as Tocqueville predicted, America has always tended to allow a potentially dangerous split between intelligence and action, and that a firmer middle way must be found. But Brooks's case for a middle way in the realm of art, manners, and morals which we call culture now seems far less persuasive.

Nothing could be clearer than that in the last forty years, as throughout our history, our writers have been great as highbrows (Eliot, Wallace Stevens), lowbrows (Dreiser, Sherwood Anderson, Frost), or as combination highbrow-lowbrows (Faulkner and Hemingway—like Melville and Whitman before them).

It is interesting that Mr. Fadiman is particularly baffled by this last category, as his remarks about it show. Perhaps the trouble is that he does not conceive how a writer like Faulkner can keep up such a lively dialectic oscillation between very sophisticated and very vulgar and earthy kinds of experience, how he emulates both Joyce and local American humor, how, in short, he is always passing through Mr. Fadiman's middle world without ever resigning from the hazards of the journey in order to settle down there. (The extreme opposites in Faulkner's mind are made to engage in a moving, fraternal colloquy in *Light in August*, in the person of the two friends, the Reverend Hightower, the intellectual, and Byron Bunch, the ordinary man.)

Lest some readers wonder why I call Sherwood Anderson a lowbrow but Faulkner a highbrow-lowbrow, let me suggest that Faulkner, like Hemingway, Melville, or Whitman, meets high culture on its own ground, as in his reading of Joyce. But in a book like *Dark Laughter*, where Anderson tries to imitate Joyce in some passages, we see that he has no real sense of Joyce's genius and that his sense of high culture is stubbornly the lowbrow's sense. Of course it is no longer possible to take literally Faulkner's pose of simon-pure lowbrowism, a standard pose of American writers beginning with Whitman.

Mr. Fadiman has several complaints about Faulkner (some of them justifiable), but two of the main ones are that Faulkner has no humor and that he is melodramatic. It is clear that basically he feels the same way about Melville and many other great American writers. Surely it does not need to be argued that Faulkner is sometimes a successful comic writer. Mr. Fadiman's trouble is that Faulkner's humor, based in the folk tradition of American speech, is rather wild, odd, and energetic, and therefore does not sound like E. B. White or Ogden Nash.

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In middlebrow criticism the term "melodramatic" is always applied to something one disapproves of. We hear from Mr. Fadiman that Faulkner's *nouvelle* called "Old Man" is "nearer to old-fashioned melodrama than to literature." Aside from the inaccuracy of the analogy, we know what Mr. Fadiman means by "old-fashioned melodrama." He means a bad blood-and-thunder play of the 1890's. But the important point is that many of Faulkner's best effects are melodramatic. As Jacques Barzun points out in his essay called "Henry James, Melodramatist," melodrama has a long and honorable history and is a more fundamental and pervasive, though not, certainly, a greater literary form than "tragedy," which is a highly special case of melodrama. There is a remarkable tradition of melodrama in American writing, to be seen, for example, in the "Gothic" effects of Charles Brockden Brown, Poe, Hawthorne, and Melville; in the heavy theatrical trappings of Whitman's "When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd"; in the figures of Man the protagonist and Death the antagonist in the writings of Stephen Crane, Emily Dickinson, and Hemingway; or in the "naturalistic" melodramas of Frank Norris and Dreiser.

Comedy and melodrama are two of the most characteristic modes of the American imagination. This should not surprise us if we reflect that both these forms depend on a sharp sense of opposites and irreconcilables. The essence of comedy is the perception of the absurdities of human experience in a context of incongruities. And melodrama occurs when we have opposites whose irreconcilability is pushed to extremes of terror and madness, such oppositions as those of Good versus Evil, God versus the Devil, Man versus Force or History or Death.

The middlebrow mind is not well equipped to understand, much less accept, these aspects of American literature. It makes a much easier connection with English literature, and we are not surprised that Mr. Fadiman prefers E. M. Forster and Joyce Cary (along with Thornton Wilder) to Faulkner and Hemingway. The fact is that for a thousand years England has been engaged in creating the only great middlebrow culture in history, with its special skill (so incalculably valuable in political history) of compromise, finding the middle way, and making even its incorrigible eccentricities normative. Yet the most interesting modern American writers—Frank Norris and Stephen Crane, Ezra Pound, Hemingway, and Faulkner—have turned, not to British literary models, but to Russian, French, and Irish.

The first consistent attempt in this country to create a consciously middlebrow literary taste was that of William Dean Howells, who, as is often said, was the mediator between two writers of greater genius than his own, Henry James and Mark Twain. Howells wanted to square American taste with the literature of centrality and moderation, with such writers as Tolstoy, Fielding, Jane Austen, George Eliot, and Matthew Arnold. Yet he always half suspected and feared the truth: namely, that the American imagination was not destined to derive its life from centrality and moderation but from alienation, separation, and extremity, and that its characteristic expression was to consist in sustained collocations of contraries. What Howells feared has turned out to have been true all along. The real affinity of American literature is not with the moderate authors Howells felt at home with, but with Dostoevsky and Chekhov, Balzac, Flaubert, and Zola, Nietzsche, Rimbaud, and Joyce.

It seems probable that the whole middlebrow enterprise has been justifiable only as a form of cultural brokerage. Mr. Fadiman may be right to say that the conditions of our society make the cultural "middleman" inevitable. But behind its mask of harmlessness and benignity, middlebrowism continues to have very large and aggressive cultural pretensions. Yet the culture it has actually created has turned out to be on the whole mediocre, emasculated, and dull, a culture that has conspicuously failed to embody the "exhilarating sense of conflict" and

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the prophetic creativeness Brooks looked forward to in *America's Coming-of-Age*. Brooks's essay is a great piece of writing, but we have lived through enough history now to see its fundamental error—namely, the idea that the duty of the intelligentsia is to create and defend a middle culture.

Is it impossible to create a valuable middlebrow culture in America? At any rate, one of Mr. Fadiman's most striking misconceptions is that it is easier to be an admirable middlebrow than an admirable highbrow or lowbrow. Apparently the natural and easy way of the American imagination lies along the "open road" of which Whitman spoke, where "opposite equals advance," where there is "always distinction, always a breed of life"; for if there is no distinction, there is no life.

Shall we not say, in conclusion, that insofar as the terms are meaningful, we are all either highbrow or lowbrow, or a combination of the two? And that the attempt to replace the natural conditions of our cultural life by a synthesis or middle ground results in futility and confusion, and alienates us from some of the deepest sources of our being?

THE LITTLE CANDY STORE

DAVID GALLER

SOMEONE had made an error in the books.
One of the boxes, where a child had scooped,
tilted and fell, and there it was—
a space among chocolates, spread with dust!

They tried to believe they had ordered too much.
What good was that? There had been days—
why, just think back!—when there hadn't been enough.
You knew how quickly choices changed!

They tried to forget. They laughed, thinking it a lesson; even the crusty, old brown dog hobbled to the front of the shop; wagging his tail, stretched out, avoiding the box.

It lay in the rear, where the child had left it—
not that she refused to pick it up—
but the wife restrained her with gum and credit,
while the kids looked in from spinning their tops.

The mothers called from the courts for supper.
The next two hours were slow, were the hardest.
Change was usually counted; then the duster;
but they sat stiffly, like children punished.

When the phone rang, they looked at each other—
"I have *nothing* to say." "*You* run this shop!"
And so it went until eight o'clock,
when the young couples came for take-out orders.

He chatted, as he packed the cups, and gave
that extra scoop to newly-weds. She? She
stuffed each bag with matches: "Don't smoke? well then, for luck!"
She smiled, and hid the shelf with her back. . . .

They watched the television late that night.
At last they rose; left the dishes unscrubbed;
and, climbing slowly to their small room above,
turned and saw the ledger in the moonlight.

Monstrous book! thought the old man.
The wife wept softly, pulling on her nightcap.
For a long while, they lay in the darkness;
then he dropped his arm around her, and they slept.

DAVID GALLER is a young poet, a native of New York, who lives and works in that city. We printed his poem "The Grandmother" in our April 1954 number.

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FROM THE AMERICAN SCENE

COLCHESTER'S YANKEE JEWS

After Half a Century

ALEXANDER AND LILLIAN FEINSILVER

THE casual tourist, stopping for a moment as he drives through Colchester—halfway between Hartford and New London, halfway between Norwich and Middletown—sees a typical New England town. There is a spacious, well-kept central mall, with a wooden bandstand and a baseball diamond. A path sheltered by towering elms wends through the green toward the graceful white Congregationalist meeting house. Not far away stands the house which Nathaniel Foote, founder of Colchester, built in 1699 after buying the land from the Indians. The local DAR uses it now. A row of fine white houses lines one side of the mall. There are memorials for the Civil War and for World Wars I and II. But the tourist, looking at the two world war plaques, would not fail to be struck by the high proportion of Jewish names among those of old New England stock.

On the other side of the mall is a two-story, red brick business block. Here are two pharmacies; a barber and a beauty shop, above which are lawyers' offices; two taverns, which are busiest between five and seven o'clock; a grocery store; a women's clothing shop; and three liquor stores. The general store, modern and well stocked, is Jewish-owned. Its attractive soda fountain appears to have a breezy but nice teen-age clientele, among whom one occasionally sees a Negro youngster or two. The drug store, efficient and immaculate, serves hot pastrami and corned beef sandwiches and hot stuffed *kishke* (not "derma") at its busy lunch counter. The market has a sign in its window proclaiming "Kosher and Non-Kosher Meat Sold Here." The mayor, the barber, the deputy sheriff, and the butcher are all Jewish.

"But this is nothing compared to what Colchester was thirty or forty years ago," the butcher tells you. "Then all the Jewish markets carried *only* kosher meat. About half the town of two thousand was Jewish then, and thousands of Jewish summer visitors from New Haven and New York came to stay at the hotels or rooming houses or on the farms. Then, everything was Jewish *and* kosher." Though Colchester has been called the Catskills of Connecticut, it is more than that. It is the scene of one of the two or three most noteworthy Jewish efforts to build a farming community in America.

ALTHOUGH a few Jewish settlers began drifting into Colchester in the 1880's, the first real settlement was in the 1890's through the impetus of the Baron de Hirsch Fund. Colchester was one of several farm settlements in eastern Connecticut aided by

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THE *shtetl*, or Jewish village set down in the middle of a non-Jewish countryside, is not something we are likely to associate with any place but Eastern Europe. But New England, it seems, also has its *shtetlach*. Here ALEXANDER and LILLIAN MERMIN FEINSILVER tell the story of the good people of Colchester, Connecticut, a town as typically Jewish as it is typically Yankee. Rabbi Feinsilver is a graduate of Western Reserve University and Hebrew Union College, where he was ordained in 1937. Now director of the Hillel Foundation at Purdue, he was at one time Hillel director at the University of Connecticut, in Storrs, not far from Colchester. Mrs. Feinsilver has written for *American Speech* and other publications. She was born in New Haven.

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the Fund, including Oakdale, Montville, and Chesterfield. Although Colchester was, for a time, the center for a state federation of Jewish farm associations, Chesterfield was originally more important: a new town developed around the farming community, for which the Fund built both a creamery and a synagogue. Over the years, however, the Jewish settlement in Chesterfield and in neighboring Oakdale and Montville declined, while in Colchester it grew.

Most of the settlers came to Colchester not at all prepared for farm life. Many came on their own, applying to the Fund for financial assistance only after making bad choices of farmland or otherwise running into difficulties. A striking example of the unsuccessful new farmer was Chaim Maier Cutler (Cutlerovitch), a wealthy businessman who had come in the 1880's. The story is told that at the time the pogroms were beginning in Russia he was playing cards with his Christian business partner. The latter had been steadily losing and writing IOU's, until he had lost $30,000, at which point he pulled out a revolver and demanded the return of the notes. Feeling that if his trusted partner could do that to him there was no hope for a Jew in Russia, Cutler went first to Palestine and then to New York. He entrusted the task of purchasing and outfitting a farm for him to his brother-in-law, a sewing machine operator.

"Der reicher Cutler" (the rich Cutler), the story continues, brought out to the farm his wife and daughters, a cook and a governess, hiring a farmhand to work while he and his family sat on the porch reading. Some ten or twelve years later, when Leon Broder (Brodsky), a young relative of Cutler's, came to Colchester, he found his "rich relative," to whom he was looking for subsidy, in tatters. Cutler had overpaid for his farmland, and his fortune had dwindled year by year through ignorance and mismanagement (his laborers pulled out the onions and left the weeds) until he was then, in 1900, mortgaged like an ordinary immigrant. Broder, now in his seventies and head of a grain company, relates that when he met Cutler, the latter said, *"Zehst dem tsurissenem hemd? Morgen ver ich gubernatur!"* ("You see this torn shirt? Tomorrow I'll be governor!")

Most of the other settlers were similarly misguided in land purchase by inexperienced relatives or friends, usually aided by ubiquitous "agents" who preyed upon the newcomers' ignorance and gullibility. Two of the better-known agents had a system of sighting a group of new arrivals and playing host at the saloon with liquor and song, painting romantic pictures of their guests' financial success soon to be achieved at farming. Downtown Jewish residents had only to hear the gay singing accompanying these till-early-morning sessions to know that another group of *shlepurim* (poor beggars) were in tow. It was common to find that a new settler had been sold stony or impoverished farmland or a barren cow, and it was not long before the de Hirsch Fund began advertising against purchasing any land through private agents before checking with the Fund to assure an honest transaction.

Under these circumstances, the first Jewish farming community could not prosper. A hardy few—such men as Frank Nelkin, David Levine, Sam Levine, and Barnett Dember—were able to stick it out and make a living. Others left to take work or to go into business in nearby cities or in New York. The old Tulin (Teletitsky) had come and gone by the mid-1890's, starting a grocery business in Hartford. Rosoff did not stay very long either, but in his brief residence he achieved some sort of fame as the farmer who had a cow that gave 35 to 40 quarts a day and had to be milked three times daily.

Colchester had a number of settlers who were businessmen from the start. As early as 1887, a Shenyan family manufactured cigars, and there were two Jewish merchants, Luntz and Nahinsky, on Main Street in the early 1890's. As the community grew, others came. Hirsch Cohen ran a butcher shop. Isaac Agronovitch, who came from Russia via Brooklyn in 1893, was in business at different times in both Chesterfield and Colchester. Sam Stern, who started as a peddler at the turn of the century, now operates a liquor store on Main Street. Its shelves hold, alongside the bottles, old *National Geographics*, a dictionary, a Hebrew Bible, a *Siddur*, Abraham's *Chapters on Jewish Literature*, and similar volumes. A Hebrew calendar and a Passover Haggadah hang on the wall.

THE first Jewish communal effort was the setting up of a cemetery, around 1890,

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with the purchase of a plot on the New London road. In 1898 the Ahavath Achim congregation was established. Daily services were held in the home of Hirsch Cohen, and High Holy Day services in Grange Hall. Hebrew classes for the children were held on the site of the present Alpert store. One mother boasts that her grown daughter, now a mother herself, still knows "every Maftir and every Haftorah."

As some of the early settlers moved away, the congregation diminished. In 1902, Hyman (Menachem Pesach) Mintz persuaded the remaining members to buy a house on Windham Avenue and convert it into a *shul* named Pische Tshuvoh. Mintz proceeded to entice the men to *shul* daily by having hot tea or *bromfen* (brandy) available at 5 A.M. On cold winter mornings the prospect of a warm house with a warming drink helped to guarantee a *minyan*. The *shul* is now the home of an elderly Polish couple, after several transformations. It was used for a time as a Hebrew school, and even as a cloak factory. Behind the house still stands a structure, now rather rundown, which contains the old *mikvah*.

Within a year or two after the establishment of the *shul*, the Jewish community had a serious scandal. A man named Marks owed $40 to a Polish laborer on his farm. Not having the money to pay him, he killed him, cut up the body, and buried it. A neighbor noticed that Marks put stones at a certain spot every day. The curious neighbor dug there one day and discovered a human foot. Since Marks had shortly before disappeared, the state offered $1200 reward for him, dead or alive. A certain Mike Levine thereupon shaved his beard and went to New York's East Side to look for Marks. He soon found the murderer and managed to bring him back and claimed the reward. Marks was tried in New London and hanged. But Levine's action in hunting down the murderer for the sake of the reward struck the Jewish community as despicable and he was banned from the *shul*, and eventually left Colchester.

AT THE very time that the Jews were coming in, the town of Colchester was undergoing a general decline. The Hayward Rubber Company, one of the biggest in the country, which had been the chief industry for almost half a century, closed its doors in 1893. The late Cyrus Pendleton, local physician and unofficial town historian, in an address in 1935 described the situation: "Following this the leather shoe factory, established to take the place of the rubber mill, soon failed. Then the canning factory, the creamery, and the bank wound up their affairs and became ancient history. The 200th anniversary of the founding of the town [1899] found Colchester on the bottom rung of the ladder with no prospects for the future."

By 1900, Colchester had fewer than 2,000 inhabitants; in 1870, the census had shown over 3,300. But the Jewish influx checked the decline, and the population of Colchester became stabilized, from 1900 to 1930, at about 2,000. The greatest Jewish settlement occurred from about 1910 to 1925.

This period saw Colchester's emergence as a summer resort. From the beginning, the farms took in summer boarders. By the time of the First World War, there were a number of hotels. The '20's saw their heyday. There were then seven major hotels: the Broadway House, Fairview House (opposite the Amston road, operated by the Cohen family), Schwartz's, Kessler's, Horowitz's, and Dember's. Downtown rooming houses also overflowed with paying guests. The seasonal total of Jewish visitors has been estimated at over 4,000, chiefly from New Haven and New York. Rare indeed was the New Haven Yiddish-speaking family that had not at some time visited Colchester for a week-end of "change," or a week of rest. One of the present writers, then a child in New Haven, made at least one visit with mother and aunt, who had been sent there by their doctor for fresh air. The same writer approached bearded Barnett Dember not long ago, one of Colchester's oldest Jewish residents. He was sitting in skullcap on his porch glider, and met her with two kindly, quizzical eyes, and the comment, *"Eppes a bekanteh"*—"Someone I know."

"I remember Colchester well, very well," a grand lady reminisced recently, beaming; Hartford born and raised, she had long ago settled in New York. "We stayed on a farm, and late in spring we'd begin stirring for the annual shift to our Colchester home. Actually, I never felt that Colchester was a vacation refuge. It was even more like home

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than Hartford. We stayed there the best part of the year—it was compact, and all of our daily activities were focused on the farm and on the town.

"I used to milk cows, and collect eggs. The stores and townspeople seemed all to be Jewish, and those not Jewish accepted us as though we were regular residents. I never felt that distance and coldness I've sensed in natives when I was a visitor to resort towns on the Cape, or in the upper New York mountains, or even in Miami. I guess my sense of comfort may have come in part from the fact that Colchester developed naturally as a Jewish town, the vacation character wasn't imposed on it from outside."

THE Jewish community grew, and in 1913 a new synagogue was built on Lebanon Avenue, which is still active. It was given the somewhat unwieldy name Ahavath Achim Upische Tshuvoh. The story behind that name records some of the early personal feuding that enlivened the settlement's growth. Mintz and a few friends would not hear of a new synagogue being built anywhere but on the site of the existing Pische Tshuvah on Windham Avenue, while the majority, headed by Hirsch Cohen and Sam Levine, were in favor of a new spot on Lebanon Avenue. The advocates of the Lebanon Avenue site went ahead, but not wishing to have the new building carry the name of the synagogue which Mintz had founded, they went back to the original "Ahavath Achim." In due time, however, the Mintz faction relented and joined the new congregation, and both names were combined. The thriving community also built a Talmud Torah (now also known as Zion Hall, and used for many meetings in addition to Hebrew classes) on Pleasant Street, and established a new "Hebrew Cemetery" on Linwood Avenue.

The 30's brought further changes. With the depression, the hotels declined. Some went out of existence and were turned into apartment houses or private homes; one burned down. During the depression, Colchester Jews tended to stay in the area, either farming full-time or supplementing part-time farming with other work; but most of this was stop-gap farming, to be dropped at the return of better business conditions. The hurricane of 1938 did considerable damage, and a number of farmers defaulted on their loans. A few refugee families came from Germany with some possessions and managed to establish new poultry and dairy farms. One such family opened a leather factory; and indeed, two of the outstanding poultry farms of the state—those of Isidore Brounstein and Morris Stolman—date from that period. But the rate of Jewish settlement was declining.

While the Jewish population has shown some growth in the past two decades, it has never equaled that of the peak or "middle" period—even with the arrival of some twenty DP families in recent years (representing almost half of all such families settled on Connecticut farms). Neither has it kept pace with the general population, which has increased from 2,000 to 3,000 since 1930. Today, perhaps 750 of Colchester's residents are Jews, representing approximately 175 families and making up about 25 per cent of the population—as against 1,000 (50 per cent) in 1915 and 640 (32 per cent) in the early 30's.

JEWISH Colchester today reflects all the various stages through which it has passed. The farm group still represents the largest single occupation, including about 60 families who farm full-time and others who do so part-time. Jews make up over 40 per cent of all farmers in Colchester and 20 per cent of all Jewish farmers in Connecticut (a total of about 300, according to Benjamin Miller, New England representative of the Jewish Agricultural Society).

The farms vary considerably in size and are almost universally owner-operated. Their chickens go mostly to New York. The dealers come up to buy them, crate them on the farm, and send them out. But "it is no good to be a farmer," according to the wife of one poultry farmer who has been there for over fifteen years. Her husband had been a baker in New York but had trouble with his sinuses, and a "big professor" told them to get themselves a farm. It's hard work, she says, the investment is high, and the enterprise can be wiped out overnight.

A few sons of the earliest settlers continue to operate their families' farms. Joseph Dember is one of these. Samuel Cutler operates the grain company established by his farmer father, Pincus Cutler—no relation to

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der reicher Cutler. A number of young men, including former GI's, have taken courses in agriculture at the University of Connecticut. One won top honors several years ago for his flock in a "Chicken-of-Tomorrow" contest.

But most of the offspring have left the farms. Tulin's son Abraham is a well-known New York attorney, active in Zionist affairs. A nephew, Leon, now deceased, was a Yale law professor. Pincus Cutler's son George, who once served as state representative from Colchester, is now a Hartford attorney. Most of the ten Elgart boys settled all over the country, in teaching and in business. Rosoff's son is a New York wholesaler. Moses Savin, grandson of Chesterfield's first *shochet*, operates a trucking company in New London, and is prominent in city and state government as well as in B'nai B'rith. His brother Abe ("Butch") Savin is a contracting road-builder, active in Jewish life in Hartford. Joseph and Daniel Polsky, who founded the Yantic Grain Company of Norwich, are sons of Mordecai Moses Polsky, a farmer in Oakdale who was an early de Hirsch agent for Colchester and vicinity.

Many simply shifted to occupations in town. The proprietors of all four grain companies either were born on farms or have had some farming connections; Joseph Shapiro of the Westchester Grain and Oil Company still operates a poultry farm. The two ladies' coat and dress factories were both established by farm families. Harry Levine, son of a farm settler of 1899, started his clothing factory in a chicken coop.

After the farmers in number come the factory workers. About 40 Jewish families are employed today in three leather factories and two ladies' coat and dress shops (all owned by Jews). Jewish businessmen and manufacturers total about 35, a majority of those in their fields.

And the resort flavor, though not so strong, lingers. One hotel is still in operation—Levy's, on the old Elgart farm—and some families take in roomers during the vacation season. Indeed the reputation of Colchester as a resort area has been so lasting that "Colchester" often means for out-of-towners the area including Lebanon and Moodus, where other hotels have taken over the trade. Colchester still is more or less "the town" for surrounding small communities. It is where one goes to pick up one's kosher meat or have one's chickens killed or to participate in a Hadassah card party.

The one movie house in town is Jewish-owned, and of the two doctors one is Jewish. The other is a Catholic who was expelled from Germany because he had one Jewish grandparent. The two dentists and two lawyers are also Jewish. (A third Jewish lawyer is in business and does not practice.) Joseph Agronovitch still runs the general store started by his parents.

WHAT of Jewish communal life today? On the surface, one might say it hasn't changed much from the time of Hirsch Cohen and Hyman Mintz. The congregation holds Orthodox services three times daily; Hebrew school (from kindergarten to high school) is in session five days a week, after public school, eleven months of the year; there is a full-time *shochet* for killing chickens; sleeping quarters for wayfarers are provided behind the synagogue in fulfillment of the injunction to care for the stranger (in one week before Tisha b'Av there were as many as nine *meshullachim*, men presenting credentials from charitable organizations to collect funds.) Many of the newest European immigrants are quite Orthodox.

Yet there are signs that the Orthodox pattern is wearing away. The Orthodox-trained rabbi conducts a late Friday evening Conservative service, and the children conduct their own Sabbath morning services—both American modernisms. And the young families don't participate. As one resident put it, "They join, but they are not active."

A one story, brown-shingled building, Zion Hall contains a small auditorium and stage, a classroom, a kitchen, and a tiled *mikvah*, long out of use. Here, the Hadassah, the ZOA, and the Young Judea hold their meetings and many of their fund-raising activities. The "Over-21" Club also operates in Zion Hall.

Many want to consolidate the activities of Zion Hall, the Hebrew school, and the synagogue in one large impressive brick building. This will take a great deal of money, which is now in the process of being raised. Some think that perhaps with more attractive surroundings, younger people will be more inclined to make better use of the synagogue and communal facilities. But as one settler

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put it, "Everything is here now, if they only want to use it." Many hate to see the old synagogue fall into disuse. One man sentimentally recalls watching his father pour cement for the foundations.

The process of "Americanizing" is of course not new. When Leon Broder first came to the home of *der reicher Cutler* more than fifty years ago, the latter's wife was already—to Broder's horror—serving *fleishig* potatoes (mixed with chicken fat) with a *milchig* meal. On the whole, however, kosher meats are still generally used in Colchester, in part, at least, because of the feeling that they are better and fresher.

THE European Jewish tradition of group self-help has been strongly preserved in Colchester. There is, characteristically, a Gemilus Chesed, free loan association of the synagogue, as well as the Leon Broder Free Loan Association. In addition, a cooperative Jewish Aid Society (formerly the Harry Elgart Lodge, named for its founder) has for many years provided loans at interest (as well as cemetery space) for members.

It is intriguing to note that even among those who have left Colchester, there has remained a continued affiliation with the home community. Almost 30 per cent of the 172 members of the synagogue are out-of-towners: either former Colchester residents or their children who have retained membership (which costs only $15 a year), partly in order to secure burial privileges. Some who have moved away keep legal residence in Colchester and vote locally. Isadore M. Davidson, son of an early farmer, in recent years moved back to Colchester after retiring from a lifetime business in Hartford, to work a small part of his father's original farm.

With respect to other Jewish organizations, Colchester reflects a more or less standard pattern: there is a Ladies' Aid Society, which acts as the congregational sisterhood; Hadassah; ZOA; and Young Judea. As might be expected, Hadassah has the largest membership, 130, including residents of nearby towns as well as some of the younger women who do not belong to the synagogue organization. The Ladies' Aid Society has 75.

The interior of the synagogue presents a general old-world atmosphere—from the hands in the priestly blessing on the inside door, to the traditional seating around the central *bima* or prayer desk, to the separate women's gallery, to the back-wall shelves of large worn Hebrew texts and the study tables adjoining. But, sign of the times, one side of the chapel, and one side only, has modern fluorescent lighting fixtures.

OVER the years, the Jewish group ran into some of the familiar rough spots as they fitted themselves into the larger community: the unsavory reputation developed by some Jewish agents in their real estate dealings; the resentment of staid New Englanders at the crowds of Jewish summer visitors; the "restricted" policies (still in effect) of hotels on nearby lakes; the wartime talk that Jews were inclined to buy farms to dodge military service. The charge, incidentally, was disproved by a study of the Jewish Agricultural Society's New England representative, who found that the proportion of boys from Jewish farm families in service was even greater than that of the general population. An honor roll hanging in the synagogue lists 82 names of members or their children who saw service, including three who gave their lives.

Yet many an early Jewish settler had occasion to be befriended by a *goy*, and today when the Hebrew school children hold a Purim masquerade, pictures of those in prize-winning costumes appear on the front-page of the newspaper. At the time of the writers' visits the town was expecting to name a new street going past Joseph Dember's farmhouse Dember Road.

The second and third generation of Colchester Jews are closer culturally and economically to the old Yankee stock than the more recently settled Slavic elements, who constitute 45 per cent of Colchester's population (about one-half of these being Polish in origin). Most of the Slavic groups live on the outskirts of town, have not penetrated into all levels of economic endeavor as the Jews have, and do not have a centralized core in the town itself. The Irish, who were once numerous in Colchester, have decreased to only 3 per cent. The Italian and Negro populations seem to be increasing lately but still number together only about 2 per cent. The Jews seem to have inherited the mantle of their Anglo-Saxon predecessors in Colchester as the most firmly entrenched and

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influential group in town. With it apparently goes recognition of the rights of all minority groups. The 50 or so Negroes in town—although they happen to live on the outskirts—appear to be free from the effects of discrimination, their white neighbors having learned to know them as individuals.

More than twenty years ago, in writing of Colchester, Charles G. Chakerian noted (in *a New England Town in Transition,* 1931) that "the social distances which separate the different elements of its population are pronounced and significant . . . social and religious activities appear to divide the town into small national and religious groupings . . . there is an absence of cooperation between the social, religious, and national 'colonies'. . . ." Yet two decades later the Jewish group, at least, shows striking changes. Jews have participated to a great degree in the general life of the community, holding many public offices, both in the "borough" (the downtown area) and the "town." They served in such important capacities as warden (mayor), burgess (alderman), prosecutor, tax collector, clerk, bailiff, elementary-school board chairman or member, trial judge, etc. They supply the leadership in the Republican party, which until recently had dominated the local scene for over a quarter-century. For almost fifteen years now, Samuel Cutler has been a member of the board of Bacon Academy, the oldest high school in Connecticut (founded in 1803) and a source of great pride to Colchester. The town health officer is Jewish, and several Jewish residents were on the committee for the town's 250th anniversary celebration. Sam Maiofes, who runs a dry goods store and sells real estate, has served as secretary of the chamber of commerce, and it was partially through his efforts that the new weekly newspaper, the Colchester *Citizen,* was begun several years ago by publisher Curtiss Johnson. Many of Colchester's representatives in the state's General Assembly have also been Jewish.

The writers when they began this research could discover only seven cases of intermarriage in the history of Colchester, five of these occurring a good number of years ago. Presumably the situation reflects the continuance to some degree of "social distances" that Chakerian wrote of, as well as the modern ease of transportation, the lack of which in earlier periods made out-of-town "dating" a difficult matter. Even these five early cases, however, exhibit varied patterns. In two marriages the Christian girl was converted, one of these ending in divorce; in a third case—involving the son of a former president of the synagogue—the children were raised as Christians and have married Christians. Recently, in one year, two Jewish girls married Gentiles.

A visitor to Colchester cannot but be impressed by the wholesomeness with which the Jews of Colchester accept themselves and—whatever slight evidences there may be to the contrary—are accepted by the non-Jews. The Jewish man who served as mayor for several terms keeps a Jewish National Fund "Blue Box" in his food store, giving free dog bones to customers—both Jews and Gentiles—only on condition that they put a contribution into the box. (He manages to raise about $300 yearly this way.) Perhaps too neatly symbolic of the Jewish situation in Colchester is the small mounting above the synagogue doorway: an American eagle holding two flags astride a Mogen David. The traditionalist might even find sad symbolism in the fact that a piece of the Mogen David is broken off.

Perhaps, however, there is no cause for special Jewish lament, even among traditionalists, for what may seem like the passing of the old glory. The pattern is after all typical of all New England towns: the boys and girls, of Gentile and Jewish settlers alike, grow up, scatter to the large cities of the world, and cultivate a pleasant nostalgia. And for those who still live in Colchester, or go there for the season as in years past, it remains a center of a Jewish life more rooted, more relaxed, more integrated with the landscape and the community than that which may be found in Lakewood or the Catskills—evidence, it may be, for the belief that there is something in the New England spirit especially responsive and hospitable to Jews.

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CEDARS OF LEBANON

HEINRICH HEINE TO HIS ECKERMANN

Excerpts from a Book of Conversations

THE one-hundredth anniversary of Heine's death on February 17, 1856, will doubtless give rise to a flood of articles about the poet, including essays dealing with Heine's puzzling and very contradictory relationship to Jewish nationalism and to the Jewish religion. Among those who flocked to the aging Heine's "mattress grave" in Paris was the German-Czech poet, playwright, and novelist, Alfred Meissner (1822-1885), who was to Heine what Eckermann was to Goethe. Meissner (who was not a Jew) had been involved in revolutionary and Czech nationalist movements, and fled from Austria to France. There, in 1847, he met the invalid Heine and became closely attached to him, visiting him almost daily right up to the time of his death. The conversations between the two men of letters are recorded in Meissner's *Heinrich Heine, Erinnerungen,* published in Hamburg a few months after Heine's death, but now almost unavailable. The excerpt presented below (in my translation, and for the first time in English) can be found in German in an abbreviated version of the original memoirs, *Die Matrazengruft: Erinnerungen an Heinrich Heine von Alfred Meissner,* edited by Georg Weberknecht (Stuttgart, 1921), and also in *Heinrich Heine, Gespraeche, Briefe, Berichte seiner Zeitgenossen,* edited by Hugo Bieber (Berlin, 1926). It offers a picture of Heine taking up his Jewishness in characteristically ironic fashion.

The particular conversation I have selected took place in 1850. Heine was mistaken in his assumption that the Roman historian Tacitus had invented the fable of the Jews' worship of an ass in their Temple—the originator was the Alexandrian philosopher Apion, an ardent Jew-hater. The Biblical episode referred to by Meissner and read aloud by Heine contains the following verses: "[The Israelites] borrowed of the Egyptians jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment. And the Lord gave the people favor in the sight of the Egyptians, so that they lent unto them such things as they required; and they spoiled the Egyptians." Some identification of the people mentioned by Heine may be in order: Georg Friedrich Daumer (1800-1875) was the author of an anti-Christian treatise, *The Secrets of Christian Antiquity* (1847). Gabriel Riesser (1806-1863) was the foremost champion in Germany of Jewish emancipation. Alexandre Weill (1811-98), originally trained for the rabbinate, was a prolific writer in German and French. Madame Heine—Mathilde Crescentia Mirat—was a simple and uneducated Parisian who delighted and embarrassed her husband with her naivety. The Iazyges were a division of the Sarmatae, a wild people who lived in ancient Central and Southern Russia. The *Bal Mabille* mentioned by Heine was a public ball, a forerunner of those gay festivities painted by Renoir and Toulouse-Lautrec.—ALFRED WERNER

ONE day I found Heine in a high mood, greatly delighted by a book . . . in which he had just been reading. It was none other than Tacitus. "Do you know," he asked me, and he was still laughing, "do you know the weird explanation this shady Roman gives of the origin of the Jewish people? I have never come across a more malicious libel! Imagine, this fellow accuses the Jews, whom, by the way, he calls *genus hominum absurdum atque sordidum,* of stemming from lepers, and worshipping an ass in their Temple."

"Perhaps he got it mixed up with the Golden Calf," I said, "the one that was cast on Horeb. . . ."

"Perhaps, but here it is, plainly stated: they worship the ass. This about the shrewdest people on earth—have you ever heard anything like it? . . . It is too funny, and if I had come across it before I certainly would have used it for a poem."

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[Heine then fluently translated the Tacitus passage in question.]

. . . He repeated: "An ass in the Temple!" and rocked with laughter. "But have you noticed," he went on, "the role the ass does play in Holy Scriptures? Remember Balaam's ass, and the asses of Saul? And Christ makes his entry on an ass. Daumer was not wrong when he spoke of an ass' cult of the Jews; still, it seems to me presumptuous of him to maintain that whenever the ass appears, the stiff-necked dogma becomes humaner. Humanism has never been a concern of asses."

"This tale of Tacitus," I said, "has its own piquancy, but I wouldn't for anything give up the other, traditional story of the exodus . . . in the Second Book of Moses [Exodus]. What a tragedy, and punctuated by the comic flashes that are never absent from this people's history! Don't you agree? Over and over . . . the awesome visage of Jehovah turns into the face of that familiar old secondhand dealer who makes loans on pledges. . . ."

"You mean the story of the borrowing of the jewels and plate?" Heine asked. "Ah, yes, that fine old story, which has so often been repeated since, with some change of address."

[Heine then read Exodus 12:35.]

He read in a loud, mock-dignified voice . . . then put the black-bound book back in its place on the night table. . . . He was silent for a while, then said in his usual voice, as if thinking aloud:

"Still, it's wrong of us to talk so mockingly. If from time to time Israel takes revenge on her persecutors with petty skullduggeries—well, that's a millionth part of the compensation she has coming! A strange people—for thousands of years constantly beaten, constantly crying, constantly suffering, perpetually forgotten by God yet still cleaving to him, more tenaciously and loyally than any other people in the whole world! If martyrdom, patience and loyalty, endurance in calamity, if all this is ennobling, then these people are nobler than a lot of others. The history of the Middle Ages . . . shows us not a single year that is not marked for the Jews by tortures, *autos-da-fé*, beheadings, extortions, massacres. The Jews suffered more from the followers of Christ . . . than ever under the most brutal and primitive Poles and Hungarians, Bedouins, Iazyges and Mongols! Oh, how lovely is the religion of love! You probably know that in Rome, the Metropolis of the Faith, for two hundred years the Jews were forced to run races on the last day of the Carnival, naked, in a loin-cloth, for the delectation of the mob. Again, these miserable people are linked together with that fatal animal. The order was: first, the asses; second, the Jews; third, the buffaloes; fourth, the Berber horses. From the lowest, most despised, to the noblest! You hear, my dear Meissner, how I, almost in the same breath, deride the Jews and sympathize with them; but they seem to me indeed as ridiculous as they are worthy of being revered. Still I could never immolate myself completely for their sake, like Herr Riesser and some others. I can lose myself in no party, neither Republican nor Patriot, Christian nor Jew. This I have in common with all creative writers: not for the enthusiastic moment, but for centuries; not for one country, but for the world; not for one race, but for mankind. It would be in bad taste and petty of me to ever be ashamed of being a Jew—as my slanderers have accused me—but it would be equally ridiculous to claim that I am one. If you read my writings, you will find me defending the Jewish people over and over again, and next time you visit me I will show you an important example. I'll read you a rather long poem that's first coming out in my next collection. Just as I was born to hold up to eternal ridicule the bad and the obsolete, the absurd, the false and the ridiculous, so it is also in my nature to feel exalted, to admire the sublime, to celebrate the living."

Heine had spoken these last words in dead earnest. . . . But as if the customary smile around the mouth must again take its place, he added jokingly:

"When the little Weill visits us, in the next few days, you, my dear friend, will be given still another proof of my piety in the ancient Mosaic faith. Weill used to be a cantor. He is the possessor of a golden tenor and chants the old desert songs of Judah in their original traditional purity, from their simple monotonousness right up to the highest flights of the Old Testament coloratura. My good wife, who is totally unaware that I am a Jew, is not a little puzzled when this unheard-of musical lamento, these tremolos

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and sotto-voces strike her ear. When Weill delivered his first piece, the poodle Minko crawled under the sofa, and Cocotte, the parrot, tried to hang herself on the bars of her cage. 'Monsieur Weill, Monsieur Weill,' Mathilde exclaimed angrily, 'do not carry the joke too far!' Weill went on singing, and the good woman turned to me and pressed me: 'Henri, tell me, what kind of songs are these?' 'These are our German folksongs,' I said—and I've stuck to that!"

AT THIS very time everyone was gossiping about Heine's conversion. Some said he was returning in spirit to Christianity; others, bolder, claimed he was returning to Judaism. Several passages in the prefaces to new editions of his books, and the fact that the Bible was often to be seen by his side, offered some basis for these rumors. We seldom spoke about this matter. But it did seem to me that Heine was then much preoccupied with thoughts of religion.

"If I could only get around on crutches," he sighed. "Do you know where I would go?"

"No," I answered.

"Straight to church!"

"You're joking!" . . .

"No, no, certainly to church," Heine answered. "And where else should one go on crutches? Of course, if I could go without crutches, I would rather take a walk on the smiling boulevards, or go to the *Bal Mabille.*"

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ON THE HORIZON

BRONX ARARAT

Mr. Odets's Folk Drama

GERALD WEALES

IT PROBABLY wasn't the forty days and forty nights of rain on the Ark roof that seemed long to Noah and his family; it must have been the hundred and fifty days that it took for the waters to go down. Wet or dry, however, neither period could have dragged more noticeably than the two hours and a little more that were needed to act out Clifford Odets's *The Flowering Peach* (a play which lasted rather less long than the flood waters took to recede). It would not be unusual to report that Odets had written a very bad play, for he has written bad plays before, but it is sad that his version of the Noah legend should be so very dull. *The Flowering Peach* managed—perhaps because of its title (Odets has a knack for titles—*Awake and Sing, Rocket to the Moon*), perhaps because of its subject—to stir up greater than average expectations. That may be why Brooks Atkinson, floundering in the Sunday *Times* to convince himself that he liked the play, hit upon the preposterous phrase "unspoken poetry" to characterize two of the scenes. Unspoken poetry, maybe; unwritten poetry, certainly. Yet the play did not really need poetry; it needed genuineness, grace, and purpose.

It was Odets's apparent decision to make of the Biblical story a modern Jewish folk play, to turn Noah and his Esther into neighbors, at least in spirit and intonation, of Myron and Bessie Berger. The pattern of Noah's family is that of many lower-middle-class Jewish families in New York. The old folks, who speak with a Yiddish accent, hold close the tradition of the family; they demand of the sons and their wives, who are Americanized (i.e., modernized) in speech and thought, a loyalty that cannot easily be given. This contrast was made particularly obvious in the production at the Belasco Theater because Noah and his wife were played by Menasha Skulnik and Berta Gersten, veterans of the Yiddish theater, and the children by actors and actresses whose experience has come from Broadway and English-language off-Broadway work.

It is, then, to such an environment that Odets tries to wed the Noah legend. He fails for two reasons. First, his setting sounds surprisingly phony, even to an outsider; second, there is a good chance that Noah could not fit into such a setting even if it were presented with authenticity. All of the familiar devices for the stage recognition of Jewish family life are in the play: there is the mixture of practical wisdom and semi-philosophic foolishness, which in this case should be inspiration, in Noah and his wife; there are the loud, pointless arguments; there is the emphasis on getting ahead; there are the recurrent references to food. The

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THE Noah story with its striking dramatic possibilities has challenged playwrights from the Middle Ages to the present. In our own country, it made a notable appearance as an American Negro folk drama, but until Clifford Odets's recent play, *The Flowering Peach*, it was never set in Jewish idiom. GERALD WEALES looks at Odets's drama, both in the context of his previous work and as an image of Jewish life. Mr. Weales, who teaches English at the Newark College of Engineering, has written for the *American Scholar*, the *Hudson Review*, and other journals. He was born in 1925, in Indiana, and received his B.A. and M.A. at Columbia.

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desultory chatter that weaves in and out of these identification marks is written and read in the inverted singsong that characterizes and caricatures English-Yiddish speech, but Odets vulgarizes the whole process. "Molly" Berg in her endless radio, television, and stage chronicle of *The Goldbergs* has set a pattern which, for all the soap-opera surroundings, has the warmth and humor that Odets is lacking; even Theodore Reeves in his pleasant little play *Wedding Breakfast* has come closer to the speech that should fall naturally to the second generation, to Noah's sons. As often as not Odets sounds as though he is writing an extended dialect joke, a friendly one of course. There are occasional funny lines, but for the most part the cheapness goes beyond the rhythm of the speech and takes in the content as well. Perhaps the most obvious example is the scene involving a tax collector, a character who is also representative of the present-day gimmicks that are used for laughs. Shem, the successful businessman son, has sold his lands and hoarded the money, forgetting that there will be no place to spend it after the flood. When the tax collector appears, Japheth has to knock Shem down before Noah can get the keys to turn over to the government man. As the latter goes off stage, the reviving Shem begins to mutter. When Noah asks, "What did he say?" somebody answers, "He says, 'Get a receipt.'"

It may be that *Awake and Sing* was no more authentic, that it was, in fact, consciously arty in its transmutation of a family in the Bronx to a family on the stage. Yet the vigor of the language and the relevance of the setting to the theme gave the play a reality that *The Flowering Peach* cannot hope to duplicate. Odets may well have gone to life for his material this time, hoping to turn it to some poetic use, but it seems plain, as the lines come across the footlights, that his source is Yiddish comedy, which is as broad as it is limited. We know from the elements of Yiddish comedy that find their way into English-language entertainment, from the comedians who, like Skulnik, have made the jump from Second Avenue to Broadway, and from the younger ones who have trained on the borsht circuit, that the jokes deal mainly and broadly with a small community of interests. Minerva Pius's Mrs. Nussbaum used to be funny because Fred Allen was blithely pushing this kind of thing as far as it would go (and besides he is a genius at puns), but to dress Noah up in such surroundings is rather on a level with the Mae West radio skit on the Garden of Eden which generated so much anger about fifteen years ago. Menasha Skulnik must share with the author the destruction of the character of Noah; the actor, when his material is fitted to his style, may be as irresistible as Wolcott Gibbs finds him, but it was easy enough to resist him when he turned Noah into a maudlin, foolish little man addicted to a number of vaudeville mannerisms. Berta Gersten's style was a little less flamboyant; the flat, solid delivery of her lines made many of them seem funnier than they were, but the same flatness and solidity operated when she was supposedly playing for pathos, so in the end her Esther became a kind of monumental one-note.

EVEN if Odets had avoided the falseness that he almost seems to have worked for, and even had he managed to bring to *The Flowering Peach* the vitality of *Awake and Sing*, it is doubtful that the Noah legend could have become a modern Jewish folk play. It is not that Noah is too weak to stand a transmutation. He has successfully become a healthy French peasant at the hands of André Obey and he has been reborn as a Southern American Negro, by Marc Connelly out of Roark Bradford. In both of these versions, however, Noah has a more valid relation to his surroundings than he does to the timeless Bronx in which Odets has placed him. Obey's Noah is in a tradition as old as medieval painting and mystery plays in which Biblical characters always became peasants of the artist's country, and is also part of a tendency in modern French literature to translate figures of Biblical and Greek legend into characters that are both peculiarly French and universal. It is also apparent that *The Green Pastures* has its roots in a genuine American Negro life.

But the story of Noah, even though it is a Jewish legend, seems to have little relation to the only two possible forms for a modern Jewish folk play. Neither Odets nor Noah could be comfortable in the European Yiddish folk tradition represented by Sholom Aleichem and Y. L. Peretz, a tiny bit of which has been Englished onto the American

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stage in Arnold Perl's *The World of Sholom Aleichem* (reviewed in COMMENTARY, April 1954). This kind of writing is inevitably marked by the situation of the European Jews out of whom it grew; it is tinged with the deprecating laughter of survival that is sometimes called "ghetto humor." Odets, as an American Jew, could not write this kind of literature and Noah, as a pre-Diaspora patriarch, could not fit comfortably into it. Any new tradition would have to lie where Odets, in his earlier plays, vaguely sees it, in the communities with a Jewish population dense enough to allow its members to retain a group personality even while they absorb everything that is more widely American.

Yiddish theater itself, the theater that gave Menasha Skulnik to *The Flowering Peach*, indicates the assimilation of the American Jew. It does not produce Biblical or even ghetto drama. It produces an endless series of musical comedies with lamentable titles, plays like *Riverside Drive*, in which Maurice Schwartz has been appearing this year, or, more significantly, the Yiddish hit of a few years ago, *Death of a Salesman*. But, of course, most Jews do not even go to the Yiddish theater. Instead they see the same Broadway shows, go to the same movies, or stay home to watch the same television programs that attract everyone else. Noah, then, is obviously not a candidate for folk hero in the mixed culture of the American Jews. Of course, in the strictest definition of folk art, the growth from within the people themselves, the plays of André Obey and Marc Connelly have no more claim to the designation than does *The Flowering Peach*, but since these playwrights were working within traditions and Odets was trying to fabricate one, their work has a genuineness which his does not.

ONE might, at least, have supposed that Odets undertook his attempt at folk art because he had something important that he hoped to say in this new guise. *The Flowering Peach* does not offer even that consolation. Just as the play cuts Noah down in stature, it reduces God to a series of lighting effects by Abe Feder, almost a variation on an offensive old joke: turn on the blue lights, the man wants a blue miracle. This is perhaps understandable because Odets is ordinarily more interested in men than he is in God. Yet the message of the play, if it has a message, is one that we have had from Odets before. When, shortly before the final curtain, Noah cocks his head and looks inquiringly toward the Lord, he comes up only with the news that the Flood was God's last bit of interference, that from now on the earth is in the hands of men. What Noah is actually telling us to do is to awake and sing—individually, not collectively this time—but, still to awake and sing. There is also the idea that Japheth spells out heavily, before he and his wife go off to repopulate the world, the new truth that he and Noah and all the brothers have learned on the voyage, that no man is always right, and that humility is more useful as a social weapon than self-righteousness. Even this idea is not totally new to Odets, for Dr. Stark has a glimmer of this truth at the end of *Rocket to the Moon*. The trouble with Odets's ideas, however, does not lie in the fact that he has said them before; they seem pointless here largely because they have no dramatic validity. Japheth says that everyone has changed on the voyage, but there has been no evidence of the changes on stage, except that Noah does let two of the sons swap wives, which he certainly would not have done at the beginning of the play. Noah's last conference with God is even more plainly outside the action of the play.

There were a few imaginative touches, one of which was the mouselike animal that Odets invented, which sang to indicate the presence of God. Another was his depiction of Ham. In the Biblical story Ham and his descendants are consigned to be forever servants because he looked upon his father's nakedness when Noah was drunk. In the play Ham's own predilection for liquor at any price and his lack of interest in anything beyond the immediate possibilities give an interesting twist to the sentence from Genesis; Shem makes the connection quite clear by shouting in a moment of anger that Ham will always work for him, for he will always have something that Ham needs. But because Odets has nothing very new or very exciting to say and because he chooses to cheapen the vessel that carries his old wine, *The Flowering Peach* is an extremely disappointing play. Because, this time at least, he has written badly and at some length, *The Flowering Peach* is a very tiresome play.

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THE STUDY OF MAN

THE "SCIENTIFIC" BASIS OF OUR IMMIGRATION POLICY

We Need a New Rationale for Reform

WILLIAM PETERSEN

ACCORDING to the arguments of many of its opponents, the McCarran-Walter Immigration Act of 1952 is not merely bad policy but a kind of freakish accident. The late Pat McCarran, the son of a poor Irish immigrant, somehow did not develop into the champion of the people one might have expected from his background. Elected to the Senate by the smallest constituency in the United States, he became a permanent fixture there and chairman of several of its key committees. When he sponsored an immigration bill in conflict with American ideals, two-thirds of the Senate passed it over President Truman's veto out of fear of the retaliation that lay in McCarran's power through his control over appropriations.

So at least one standard liberal argument runs. In another version of this devil theory, the culprit was not a single individual but the small minority of the electorate that espouses racism. Somehow, according to this view, the democratic credo has been frustrated by the activities of certain nativist and proto-fascist groups on the periphery of our society.

But the amorphous prejudice that the mass of native Americans feel, or felt, against immigrants was not sufficient in itself, even in its extremist versions, to effect the basic change in American policy that the "national quotas" system represents, and that made this latest offense to democratic ideals possible. The responsibility must be sought elsewhere. What social group made racist sentiment respectable, and thus an appropriate basis for American legislation? Who, to use the term of the German sociologist Max Weber, "legitimized" the national-quotas system?

The process by which a policy becomes legitimate ordinarily begins with its explicit justification in terms of logic, science, or religion—in terms, that is, of universally accepted values. By its very nature, such a transformation can be undertaken only by those whose intellectual authority the society respects—in this case, America's leading social scientists. Before the immigration laws of the 1920's could be passed, a generation of anthropologists, economists, sociologists, and historians had labored to give the principle of the national-origins quota an underpinning that would square with the dominant American value system. By the writings of these scholars during the half century before 1920, a new, alternative system of values was established in sufficient strength to sway the thinking of the mass

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THE McCarran-Walter Immigration Act of 1952 was no isolated piece of legislation, but rather one expression of the now dominant attitude of exclusion which has worked a reversal in the American tradition of welcoming the oppressed of the Old World. If we hope to develop a newer immigration philosophy more in accord with authentic scientific fact and traditional democratic ideals—and, above all, to do away with the national-origins and racist features marking immigration policy in recent decades—we must, WILLIAM PETERSEN contends here, understand the rationale of this policy of exclusion with its supporting "scientific" data. Mr. Petersen, born in Jersey City in 1912, studied economics and sociology at Columbia, the New School, the Sorbonne, and the University of Amsterdam. He has taught at Columbia and Smith and is now assistant professor of sociology at the University of California. He is author of the still discussed "Is America Still the Land of Opportunity?" (November 1953).

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and, eventually, to set national policy. But if this analysis is correct, proponents of a more liberal immigration policy will not be able to get their ideas written into law until they recognize that this new, divergent value system has achieved a certain legitimation, which can be shaken only by fundamental opposition.

ONE of the principles established by the American and French revolutions was that—as the French constitution of 1791 put it—"the liberty of all to move about, to remain, or to leave" is a "natural and civil right." In the United States, this doctrine was reinforced by another: this country was ordained as a haven for "the wretched refuse of your teeming shores"—to quote Emma Lazarus's words inscribed on the base of the Statue of Liberty. Against this background, the xenophobia implicit in the present immigration policy could not be established as a general norm. The Alien and Sedition Acts were repealed under Jefferson, and in the aftermath were an important reason for the eclipse of the Federalist party that had enacted them. The nativist movement of the 1830's, the Know Nothing party of the 1850's, the American Protective Association of the early 1890's, the Ku Klux Klan reborn in 1915—all these movements, while indicating the persistence of anti-foreigner sentiment in America, also reflect the fact that it was, and is, usually limited to noisy groups of merely local importance. In the face of America's dominant value system, as exemplified in such fundamental documents as the Declaration of Independence, even the government's power to deny entry to various categories of people universally agreed to be undesirable—prostitutes, "lunatics," "idiots," "anarchists," criminals, polygamists—was established only gradually, after the Supreme Court had denied the constitutionality of a series of state laws. The first attempts at a broader restriction of immigration were formally an extension of this type of regulation. Thus, a number of states tried to check the influx of the poor by imposing a head tax on immigrants, but these attempts were frustrated by several Supreme Court decisions. Similarly, successive bills in Congress barring the admission of illiterates were vetoed by Presidents Cleveland, Taft, and Wilson. As the last put it, illiteracy was a measure not of a man's small innate ability but of his limited opportunities, and in Wilson's day these were not considered a legitimate reason for denying anyone his "natural" right to immigrate here.

EVEN the laws barring Chinese immigration were enacted without obliterating the distinction between police *regulation* (e.g. exclusion of criminals) and *restriction* based on a broader criterion (e.g. exclusion of illiterates). The argument of white Californians that the Chinese were unassimilable to American life was valid—because, as Milton Konvitz has put it, they were denied citizenship through naturalization, held ineligible to testify in any case in a court of law for or against a white person, subject to special heavy taxes, unable to vote, excluded from schools. The Chinese were made "the scapegoat for mining and real estate booms and slumps; for crime waves requiring vigilance committees; for corruption, extravagances, and profligacy in state and city government; and for the land and railway monopoly."

But even though the rest of the country had almost no reliable knowledge on which to judge the question, white California could not get its way immediately. American law and institutions were based on principles that could not be used to sanction the exclusion of any ethnic group. Twice the Supreme Court threw out Chinese exclusion laws as unconstitutional, and it finally accepted them because one member of that court, Justice Stephen J. Field—a native of California—was able to persuade his colleagues of the correctness of his arguments. The Chinese were thus the first to be excluded as an ethnic group, rather than as individuals with specifically objectionable personal characteristics. So gross a violation of the national ethos, accepted finally only because it affected what was regarded as a peripheral case, set a precedent, and the interpretation of cultural differences in racial terms eventually became the keystone of American immigration policy.

Whom We Shall Welcome, the report of the Perlman Commission that President Truman appointed to review and criticize the McCarran Act, pointed out—correctly—that the national-quotas system was based on anthropological theories that no reputable social scientist would now defend. America's immigration policy runs counter to the basic credo of the country, and the policy gets no support from present-day science. How then was it established? Let us retrace the steps by which a man's place of birth became a legitimate criterion for judging his application to enter the United States.

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At the beginning of the 19th century one Elkanah Watson noticed that without immigration—which had been interrupted by the wars in Europe—the population of the United States had increased by about one-third during each of the two decades following the 1790 census. His calculation as to how the population of the country would continue to increase up to 1900 if that same extraordinary rate of growth were maintained was widely accepted as a significant contribution to demography.

In 1873, Francis A. Walker, the Superintendent of the Census, wrote an article gently deriding Watson's thesis and those who took it seriously. In the first place, Walker wrote, "Geometrical progression is rarely attained, and never long maintained, in human affairs. Whenever it is found, the most improbable supposition which could be formed respecting it is that it will continue." That is, the fact that the population of the United States had twice increased by about a third within ten years warranted no prediction concerning the future. That Watson's forecast had been confirmed for a while was simply a matter of luck: "Mr. Watson simply bet nine times upon the red. Five times the red won—a wonderful run of luck, certainly." The rate of population growth would have declined much earlier had not immigration happened to compensate for the decline in the birth rate:

"The change [in the birth rate] came; came later even than it had been reasonable to expect. It began when the people of the United States began to leave agricultural for manufacturing pursuits; to turn from the country to the town; to live in up-and-down houses, and to follow closely the fashion of foreign life. The first effects of it were covered from the common sight by a flood of immigration unprecedented in history."

All this Walker wrote in 1873, when the number of immigrants from Southern and Eastern Europe totaled only 12,703.

Twenty years later, when the new immigration was approaching its peak of more than half a million a year, Walker wrote three articles in an entirely different vein. Immigration, he now found, "instead of constituting a net reinforcement to the population, simply resulted in a replacement of native by foreign elements." He proved this by using Watson's projection of American population growth, but now in the contrary sense. In 1840 and 1850, he pointed out, in spite of the large immigration during this period, the census count differed from Watson's projection by only a few percentage points. The threefold increase in immigration from one decade to the next, Walker asserted, had merely caused the native birth rate to decline proportionally; for the American "was unwilling himself to engage in the lowest kind of day labor with these new elements of population . . . [and] even more unwilling to bring sons and daughters into the world to enter into that competition."

The typical immigrant, in Walker's view, had changed from "the most enterprising, thrifty, alert, adventurous, and courageous of the community from which he came" to "the least thrifty and prosperous . . . [from] every foul and stagnant pool of population in Europe, which no breath of intellectual or industrial life has stirred for ages." He therefore proposed a new policy—the exclusion not only of criminals, paupers, etc., but also of hundreds of thousands of people "the great majority of whom would be subject to no individual objections" but who came from the wrong sort of country. For Walker, the question was how to protect "the quality of American citizenship from degradation through the tumultuous access of vast throngs of ignorant and brutalized peasantry from the countries of eastern and southern Europe."

In spite of Walker's high standing as a social scientist, it is rather easy to show that his later articles were *ad hoc* concoctions designed to lend scientific flavor to certain ethnocentric prejudices without foundation in empirical data. The most significant fact to be noted about the three articles in which he advanced his vehement objections to immigration is their dates: 1891, 1892, and 1896—the decade after the main source of American immigration had shifted to Southern and Eastern Europe. His emotional reaction to the foreignness of "tumultuous" hordes of "brutalized" peasants led him to conclude that immigration had to be curbed; then, and only then, did he look for a scientific theory that would support this conclusion. Nor did he even attempt to refute his own earlier article; he simply ignored it.

In the meantime, American historians had been fashioning evidence to show that a fundamental affinity existed between the Germanic peoples and the American way of life. Edward N. Saveth has given us the story of this episode of historiography in a fascinat-

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ing work, *American Historians and European Immigrants, 1875-1925* (Columbia University Press, 1948). Historians like John Fiske, John W. Burgess, and Henry Cabot Lodge, Sr. (until he became a candidate for political office) held that American institutions were derived from the ancient Teutons, either directly or through the Anglo-Saxons; and they supported this hypothesis by finding analogies, say, between the structure of the Teutonic and the New England village. Accordingly, an infusion of such "alien" and "inferior races" as the Latins or the Slavs would weaken the foundations of American society.

A revolt against this "Teutonic hypothesis" was led by Frederick Jackson Turner, who emphasized the original elements, without European precedent, of America's frontier society. But he, too, considered immigrants from Southern Italy to be "of doubtful value judged from the ethical point of view," and the Jews a "people of exceptionally stunted growth and of deficient lung capacity." He wrote: "Italians, Slovaks, Poles and other immigrants of Eastern Europe, together with the Russian Jews, have struck hard blows since 1880 at the standard of comfort of the American workmen. They have made New York City a great reservoir for the pipe lines that run to the misery pools of Europe." Though the eminent John Bach McMaster, for instance, sounded a contrary note, this was the dominant tone of American historians up to the 1920's, when the national-quotas act was passed. And their theories provided a good part of that act's scholarly underpinning.

The only important counterweight to the pro-Nordic tendency of the professional historians was the ancestor veneration (what Dr. Saveth calls "filiopietism") of the amateurs with non-Anglo-Saxon names. However: "Because their insecurity was greater," writes Dr. Saveth, "the jingoism of the historians of recent immigrant ancestry far exceeded the chauvinism of historians derived from the older American stock." The patent exaggerations of the writings sponsored by the Huguenot Society of America, the Scotch-Irish Society of America, the American Irish Historical Society, the American Jewish Historical Society, and the rest probably served only to reinforce by contrast the Teutonic and frontier myths, which were at least offered with the proper professional credentials and the appropriate academic apparatus.

More important, however, in clearing the way for the national-quotas act of 1924 than either Walker's or the historians' theories was the *Report* of the Senate Immigration Commission of 1907-11, headed by Senator William P. Dillingham of Vermont. The sheer mass of data contained in this document, much of it based on first-hand investigation, tended to overwhelm opposing views: no one person or organization could stand up against four years of investigation and forty-two volumes of evidence and interpretation. Even the one member of the Commission who disagreed with some of its important recommendations, Congressman William S. Bennet of New York, did no more than say so in a half-page statement: "As the report of the Commission is finally adopted within a half hour of the time when, under the law, it must be filed, there is no time for the preparation of an elaborate dissent." The Commission presented its views in abridged form in two volumes; and a more popular version by Jenks (one of the Commission's members) and Lauck long remained a standard text on immigration.

One of the forty-two volumes prepared by the Senate Immigration Commission was a *Dictionary of Races or Peoples* that classified immigrants to the United States in forty-five ethnic groups in accordance with the practice of the Bureau of Immigration. These groups were defined in different ways—by physical differences (for example, Negroes); by language (Germans, including German-speaking Swiss, Austrians, etc.); by nationality, even when not associated with a state (Ruthenians); by geography (Scandinavians, West Indians). Though the practice of the Bureau of Immigration had included Jews among the Slavs, the more "scientific" *Dictionary* pointed out that the "Hebrews" were in the Chaldaic "group" of the Semitic "stock" of the Caucasian race.

Almost all the data that the Commission collected on the different peoples of the world were broken down according to "race." Sometimes the scarcity of the individuals available from which to draw conclusions about a specific group in a specific situation was disguised by presenting the data as percentages: thus, of the Greeks employed in the packing industry who had been in the United States for over ten years, "60 per cent" had visited abroad—or three out of a total of five persons.

The main body of the Commission's *Report* traced in great detail the immigration from

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Southern and Eastern Europe, and declared it to have a causal connection with the economic dislocations and troubles in the United States over the same period—which was marked by rapid industrialization and urbanization. In the only significant contemporary rejoinder to the *Report*, Isaac Hourwich's *Immigration and Labor* (Putnam, 1912), a wealth of data was presented to show that this causal relation was specious. Dr. Hourwich pointed out that the correlation between immigration and unemployment was negative, not positive; that the "displacement" of native American girls from the mills was motivated by their own desire for the new office jobs then opening up; and that, similarly, miners and those in other low-status jobs were "displaced" not by unemployment but by the attraction of better-paying, higher-status jobs.

Strangely enough, Dr. Hourwich was accused by the other side of having *too much* documentation behind him. "It is a safe assumption," said an important review of the book by Henry Pratt Fairchild, now Professor Emeritus at New York University, "that the impressive mass of material—statistical tables, charts, diagrams, and footnotes—will seem to the ordinary reader a sufficient proof of any conclusions which the author wishes to draw from them. It is because this assumption is grounded in human nature that the book is dangerous." This was a peculiar criticism altogether, and especially as applied to a book written in answer to forty-two volumes crammed tight with tables, charts, diagrams, and footnotes, and stamped with official authority to boot.

THE most direct connection between racist doctrine and American immigration policy was established by the influence of Dr. Harry H. Laughlin of the Eugenics Record Office of the Carnegie Institution of Washington. Well known as an advocate of sterilization of inmates of institutions, Laughlin became "expert eugenics agent" to the House Committee on Immigration and Naturalization. A report he submitted to it in 1922, *Expert Analysis of the Metal and the Dross in America's Melting Pot*, so impressed Congress that, according to one authority, "it is often considered the principal basis of the Act of 1924."

Laughlin used a so-called contingency analysis, in order to show that the distribution of social ills was not random. He compared the proportion of persons from each ethnic group in prisons, asylums, and similar institutions with the proportion of the country's total population that this ethnic group constituted. For example: in 1910, persons of Italian birth made up 1.46 per cent of the total population and, if proportionally represented in the 93 insane asylums that Laughlin surveyed, they would have constituted 1.46 per cent of the total number of inmates, or 1,228. Since there were actually 1,938 Italian-born persons in these institutions, the incidence of insanity among Italians was concluded to be more than one and a half times higher than that of the general population. For social inadequacies of all types, Laughlin found that the various groups into which he divided the population were represented as follows in relation to their "expected figure" of 100:

Total native white	91.89
Of native parents	84.33
Of mixed parents	116.65
Of foreign parents	109.40
Total foreign-born white	145.75
Northwest Europe	130.42
Southern and Eastern Europe	143.24

Laughlin concluded from these statistics that all foreigners were inferior, and especially those from Southern and Eastern Europe. He also asserted that the "first and primary factor" that had caused the different proportions of ethnic representation in institutions was "differences in constitutional susceptibility of specific races and nativity groups to certain definite types of social inadequacy." That is to say, such "degeneracies" as "criminality" were "inherited in the blood." The implications of such an analysis for policy were clear: "There has, thus far, been no suggestion in our laws of any requirement except personal value in our sorting of would-be immigrants. [However] the surest biological principle . . . to direct the future of America along safe and sound racial channels is to control the hereditary quality of the immigration stream."

The flaws in this "expert analysis" were numerous and fundamental. The notion that "criminality" and most other social inadequacies are hereditary was no longer generally accepted even in the 1920's, so unfounded had it been shown to be. Today only crackpots dare repeat it.

Strangely enough, Laughlin's own data on feeble-mindedness (one of the few such inadequacies that *may* be inherited) refute his gen-

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eral conclusion. Only two foreign groups showed a ratio of feeble-mindedness higher than 100—Serbians, with *two* cases, and Australians, with *three* cases. The foreign-born as a group showed a ratio for feeble-mindedness of only 31.6, and those from Southern and Eastern Europe one of 33. In contrast, native whites as a group were above 100, as also the subgroup formed by those with native parents.

Moreover, even if one should grant that "criminality" is inherited, it does not follow that its heredity can be traced through such vague and ambiguous groups as Laughlin's "races." In general, he used the classification of "races" recommended in the Senate Commission's *Report,* but he went beyond even its grossly unscientific methods—breaking down, for example, native white Americans into four sub-groups: "Mountain White," "American Yankee," "American Southerner," and "Middle-West American." That these classifications should have been accepted as "races or nativity groups," rather than as the cultural groups they patently were, indicates an extraordinary will on the part of the Congressmen to accept Laughlin's main point.

His data were in any case incomplete and statistically biased. He had returns from only 445 of the 657 state and federal institutions that were relevant to his analysis, and he made no allowance for the bias that this incomplete sample introduced. He did not correct for the differences in age structure and sex ratio of the several groups, although immigrants tended to be concentrated in the middle male age group, which in every society has the highest incidence of many social ills.

Finally, Laughlin ignored the differences in the availability of institutional care in the various sections of the country. Institutions were relatively scarce in the immigrant-free South, for instance, while immigrants were concentrated in Northern cities, where social care was much more adequate. As Antonio Stella has demonstrated, by Laughlin's method of analysis Negroes prove to be far less afflicted with "social inadequacies" than white Southerners. Feeble-mindedness is eight times more prevalent among native white Southerners than among Negroes, epilepsy nearly ten times, blindness twenty-four times, tuberculosis two and a half times, insanity one and a half times, deafness one and a half times, physical deformity eight times, dependency four times. In only one social ill, crime, is the quota fulfillment of Negroes higher than that of native whites, for the one institution with which the Southern Negro is adequately supplied is prisons.

LAUGHLIN submitted his report in 1922, and two years later the policy he recommended was enacted into permanent law. It is true, as many have pointed out, that the immigration laws of the 1920's were passed during the period of xenophobia and labor unrest following the First World War. But it is not true—as this observation is meant to imply—that these laws, like the Palmer raids, were merely another manifestation of temporary hysteria. Their enactment came as the culmination of decades of effort, and on the basis of principles that had thus become legitimized.

In an article in *Reader's Digest,* Congressman Walter declared that the act of which he was co-sponsor has removed the racial discrimination contained in the old law of 1924. This assertion was based principally on the fact that most Asiatic countries, whose emigrants used to be barred altogether, are now given a face-saving annual quota of 100 persons each. In every other respect, however, the McCarran-Walter law has continued and even extended the racism implicit in the 1924 act. Quotas used to be based on the country of birth, and this is still so except for a person who is Asian "by as much as one-half of his ancestry"; such a person, no matter where born, must immigrate under the minuscule quota assigned to the country of his Asian parent. Similarly, by the new law natives of the British West Indies—many of whom are Negroes—may no longer immigrate under the large British quota: they now have one of their own amounting to 100 per year. More fundamentally, the McCarran-Walter act has retained the national-origins system as the basis of American immigration policy, and this system can be justified only by the racist principles Mr. Walter disavows.

WHY was it that American social scientists of the pre-1914 period generally supported a national-quotas system and the anthropological theories implicit in it? Without attempting a definitive answer to so large a question, one can suggest three probably relevant factors.

1) The main source of immigration to the United States shifted from Northwest Europe to Southern and Eastern Europe at about the same time that the American economy underwent a fundamental transformation. The Ger-

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man or Swedish peasant who immigrated during the years right after the Civil War took advantage of the Homestead Act and became an American farmer; but when the Italian or Polish peasant arrived this frontier was closed, and burgeoning American industry had begun to call for more and more unskilled labor. The new immigrants, therefore, had simultaneously to undergo two processes of adjustment: from their native cultures to the American one, and from a rural to an urban way of life—the second adaptation being much the more difficult one. The social ills attributed to the innate inadequacies of the new immigrants were the result basically of the extremely rapid development of an industrial society, but it was the new immigrants who became the most conspicuous casualties of this process. Not only did city slums (for example) develop much faster after large numbers of Poles (for example) began to arrive, but it was the Poles who lived in the slums and thus developed the characteristics typical of slum residents. Given the level of their scientific disciplines at that time, social scientists drew the "obvious" conclusion that Poles had caused slums.

2) Such a conclusion, moreover, was in line with the general climate of opinion of the period. The Darwinian theory, having conquered biology, was advancing into the social sciences: this was the heyday of social Darwinism and physical anthropology. Man had finally come to be viewed as part of nature, and his physical group characteristics—such as pigmentation and cerebral index—acquired a new significance by analogy with the characteristics differentiating other animal and plant species and varieties. While a racist analysis at that time often had the same nastiness that it has today, as in the writings of Madison Grant and Lothrop Stoddard, sometimes it also became, by its link with evolutionary theory and the dispassionate application of the latter to human origins, the expression of a kind of naive, science-oriented progressivism. We contemporaries of Adolf Hitler have been taught that false anthropological theories can have horrible consequences, but it would be anachronistic to expect people living before 1914 to have either our greater knowledge on this matter or our far greater sensitivity to the implications.

3) Finally, virtually all the men who legitimized the national-origins system were themselves of Anglo-Saxon background. The new immigrants, just because they had come to this country only recently, had not yet produced their share of professors or statesmen. The men who wrote the important works on immigration and race were named Walker, Fiske, Burgess, Lodge, Turner, Dillingham, Fairchild, Hall, Commons, Ross, Garis, and so on; while the few who answered their arguments were named, for example, Hourwich and Stella—and, as an exception to the rule, Willcox. With respect to any one individual, such a distinction would be invidious, but the predominantly Anglo-Saxon family background and German intellectual tradition of the American scholarly community as a whole in that period certainly had some influence on the theories it evolved.

None of these three points holds today. We now know that the scholarly basis on which the national-origins quota rests was itself compounded out of ignorance and prejudice. Why, then, though aware that racist theory is both false and gravely dangerous to our democratic system, do we retain a law deriving from that theory? In broadest terms, it is because the national-quotas system has acquired an independent legitimation: during the thirty years that it has been part of the law of the land it has established a certain tradition, so that the burden of proof now lies with those who advocate a different immigration policy. The opponents of the national-quotas system have two enormously powerful weapons—our present knowledge concerning group differences and the continued pertinence of the basic American credo—but very often these weapons have not been used effectively.

What alternative shall we offer in place of the present act? Eliminating racism, and going back to deny entry only to specific persons with *objectionable individual characteristics* would not suffice of itself to define an immigration policy. The standard of living in the United States is high enough to make migration attractive to a sizable proportion of the world's 2.4 billion people, and some more or less arbitrary limit must therefore be set to the number of those admitted in any one year. The Perlman Commission recommended that the annual maximum of immigration be set at one-sixth of one per cent of the country's current population—which, at the present time, would amount to slightly more than 250,000 persons, compared with the 150,000 admissible under the McCarran-Walter Act. But how would these 250,000 be selected?

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Certain persons would continue to be excluded (criminals, prostitutes, etc.); and the Commission recommended that preference be given to applicants in four specific categories—those seeking asylum, those seeking to rejoin their families, those who could fill occupational needs in the United States, and those in areas suffering from population pressure that could be relieved by emigration. But there would certainly be enough in the last group alone to fill the full quota of 250,000 many times over—not to mention the hundreds of thousands who would find a way to escape from the Communist countries if they could hope for a final refuge in the United States. In 1953, the year of the riots in East Berlin, exactly 305,737 refugees were registered in West Berlin alone. There are more than a million refugees from Communist China presently in overcrowded Hong Kong.

Finally, the Perlman Commission recommended a fifth category of "general" immigration:

"The standards to be applied under this category should not be rigid. The agency charged with such a responsibility should have a reasonable latitude in reaching a fair, impartial and workable result, and should safeguard this category so that no one country, group, or area would obtain unfair advantages under its operation."

But in a dispute over values, such words as "reasonable," "impartial," "fair," and "unfair" mean nothing unless they are very explicitly defined. In effect, the Commission has recommended that, within the very broad limits set by the law, actual policy should be determined by an administrative agency. Such a flexible system has been in force for decades in Canada, for example, where our same policy of discrimination against all but Northwest Europeans has been practiced in fact without ever being written into law. As a matter of fact, the Senate Immigration Commission of 1911 itself recommended that serious consideration be given to the convenient and flexible procedure that Canada had developed:

"The Canadian immigration law is admirably adapted to carrying out the immigration policy of the Dominion. Under its terms no immigrants [except Chinese] are specifically denied admission solely because of their race or origin, or because of the purpose for which they have come to Canada, but the discretion conferred upon officials charged with the administration of the law does make much discrimination entirely possible."

The responsibility of finding an adequate basis for policy cannot be evaded by establishing one more Washington bureau.

Our thinking about the values underlying immigration policy, as about many other social and political issues, can be clarified by distinguishing between the views of two types, which we will term Liberal and Progressive. The Liberal is attached to those values of rationalism, humanitarianism, and individual rights characteristic of the modern Western world at its best. The Progressive, though he often speaks with the same words, got many of his ideas of what is socially desirable from leftist politics, either directly or indirectly. The Liberal and the Progressive are not real persons; indeed, part of our problem lies in the very fact that these two patterns of thought are not so sharply distinguished in American society as they are drawn here in the effort to define them.

The nativist argument against immigration has been in terms of values: "100-per-cent Americanism," and in terms of alleged fact: the immigrant never completely loses his alien culture. From the beginning, proponents of a less restrictive immigration policy have tended to ignore the first point and to concentrate on answering the second. Thus, a generation ago the nativist campaign against "hyphenated Americans" was answered with Israel Zangwill's gruesome metaphor of "the melting pot." Everything we have learned since then, however, corroborates the stand of Henry Pratt Fairchild and the others who denied that those put into the pot were melted down into an indistinguishable mass. To cite only one example, but a crucial one: we now know from such studies as those by Paul F. Lazarsfeld and Samuel Lubell that a person's vote is strongly influenced by his religious and ethnic affiliations. "The Jewish vote" or "the Irish vote" is not a reactionary stereotype, but a fact of American politics; it is a fact, however, that the Progressive cannot use and so must suppress.

Since the Progressive cannot make the new empirical data indicating that distinctive ethnic differences persist fit *his* idea of the good society, he is reduced to his own brand of Know-Nothingism. He refuses to use words that designate any group differences other than those of social class. For him there are no races—

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or, more typically, *race* is synonymous with *species* ("There is only one race, the human race"). Negroes are "the colored people," Italian-Americans are "the Italian-speaking people," Puerto Ricans are "Spanish-speaking Americans," and so on. Such somatic characteristics as skin color and hair texture must be glossed over, and the facts of cultural difference are equally taboo.

THAT is to say, the nativist and the Progressive disagree sharply concerning the facts of acculturation; but the nativist, who insists that significant group differences do exist, is closer to the truth as we know it. Concerning the values underlying immigration policy, however, the disagreement between the nativist and the Progressive is less sharp. An answer to xenophobia that consists principally in an attempt to cover over and disguise existent group differences implicitly affirms the "100-per-cent Americanism" assumption that all such differences are reprehensible. To deny the fact of the Jewish vote, for example, is only superficially a discussion of empirical data; more fundamentally, it is to assert that there may not legitimately be a connection between a man's being Jewish and the way he votes. But this is a moral issue, which can be discussed meaningfully only in terms of values. The immigrant generation of the 1920's was too insecure to face this issue squarely, and this pattern of evasion set a precedent that is still often followed.

In terms of values, the nativist has a weak case, for his claim to represent the fundamental American credo is fraudulent. In what do the "100-per-cent-American" and the "un-American" differ? Is the distinction ethnic, cultural, or political? It is all three together, and indeed the essence of the dichotomy is that it tends to fuse the three into one. It is of the nature of such invidious distinctions to spread: the Nazi persecution of the Jews eventually extended to "Jews" with one Jewish grandparent and then to "Jew-lovers"; the Soviet persecution of kulaks eventually included that most urbane of city-bred intellectuals, Nikolai Bukharin, because of his "kulak soul." The American nativist is not typically a totalitarian, but he does tend to see the world as black or white, and all who differ in any way from his parochial provincialism essentially one. It is therefore entirely in keeping that the McCarran-Walter Act, which continues and reinforces the racism of the immigration laws of the 1920's, should also impose a more rigid bar to "subversives"—a term it defines loosely and broadly.

There is much in the American culture that facilitates such a trend toward the absolute uniformity of the mass society, but the American democratic credo does not. That all men are equal does not mean that all men are the same, for the egalitarian theme is balanced by one of federalism. *Liberté, égalité, fraternité,* later the slogan of the French revolutionaries, gave some of its ideological underpinning to the revolt of the American colonies, but the motto of the United States became *E pluribus unum.* By now, the doctrine of states' rights has too often become what Dr. Samuel Johnson called patriotism, the last refuge of scoundrels; but the federal framework of values remains, and with it the task of defining in modern terms the legitimate range of group differences within an encompassing national unity.

UNHAPPILY, this is a task in which few are interested. The inter-relation among America's diverse ethnic strains, which *is* American history, is still studied principally in terms of pious exhortations to mutual tolerance and of filiopietistic success stories—as though the success of immigrants and immigrants' sons were still something to be considered remarkable. The brilliant pioneering work of Marcus Lee Hansen, cut short by his untimely death, has not established a new school, as had Turner's grosser insight a generation earlier. Hansen's masterwork was to have been a trilogy on modern emigration from Europe; but only the first volume, *The Atlantic Migration* (Harvard, 1940), which took the reader only up to 1860, was ever written. The four years Hansen had spent on research in the countries of Northwest Europe gave his volume a unique authenticity; and the mass of data he accumulated, which might have overwhelmed a lesser historian, Hansen used to give his account greater depth. "The" immigrant never merged into a vague, flat stereotype; immigrants were persons who wrote letters home (which Hansen quotes), and whose difficulties and successes were recounted in the local newspapers (which he dug out of dusty files). On the other hand, the common experience of pulling up roots and establishing themselves in a new country cut across individual and cultural differences: immigrants were not only persons but also the raw material out of which Americans, a new cultural type, were formed.

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Hansen's extraordinary ability to combine psychological insights with historical data is well illustrated by a small essay that COMMENTARY readers may remember (see "The Third Generation in America," November 1952). It is well known—and perhaps even true—that the second generation tends to reject its parents, whose alien origin it regards as a stigma. The third generation, on the contrary, is secure enough to take its Americanism for granted, and is often interested in the cuisine, history, and folk art of its grandparents in the Old Country. In this article, Hansen gave some empirical substance to this generalization by showing that the various filiopietistic historical societies in America had generally been founded at one generation's remove from the time when the respective ethnic group's immigration was at its quantitative peak.

The concept of a multicultural society implicit in Hansen's work has not been developed to the full, but other scholars are contributing to an eventual synthesis. Oscar Handlin's several highly readable books on immigrants and their American progeny—the latest is *The American People in the Twentieth Century* (Harvard, 1954)—are clearly in the same tradition as Hansen. Melville Herskovits has also done research on both sides of the Atlantic; and by his precise knowledge of West African societies, he was able to see the subculture of the American Negro in deeper perspective than any of the scores of scholars who had taken slavery as their base line. In Samuel Lubell's interpretation, such important divisions in American politics as the split between isolationists and interventionists have turned out to be half-disguised indices of persistent ethnic differences. The provincial horror with which an earlier generation of sociologists viewed marginality is not shared, for example, by David Riesman: whether the "marginal man" who partakes of two subcultures is torn apart or enriched by his situation depends on whether society and he himself see this intermediate status as legitimate. Margaret Mead and Geoffrey Gorer have tried to analyze the effect of the immigrant father's ambiguous authority on child-rearing in America; and if some of their answers are highly speculative, they have at least asked the right questions. Thorsten Sellin has made extensive studies of the relation between crime and ethnic background. In several of Milton Konvitz's books, immigration law is interpreted in a new value framework. The terms multicultural society and cultural pluralism come, I think, from Horace Kallen, who has written a dozen essays defining them.

This heterogeneous group of writers does not yet form a climate of opinion. That is to say, they and others like them write without necessarily being aware that they are all elaborating the same two basic propositions—that Old Country traits do not completely disappear in American society, and that the resultant cultural pluralism does not of itself weaken national unity. Thus, these scholars are a counterpart to those whose works have been summarized in this article; and the facts and values they offer constitute the beginning of a scholarly legitimation of the different immigration policy that will perhaps one day become law.

The theories that were developed in the decades before 1920, it has been maintained in this article, were largely rationalizations to justify the primitive dislike that Americans of Anglo-Saxon stock often felt for the new immigrants from Southern and Eastern Europe. Similarly, many of the counter-arguments offered now are—and will have to be—rationalizations of some other, more humanitarian sentiment. In the end, something more than an appeal to scientific evidence or self-interest is needed. For, though the arguments of Walker, the Senate Immigration Commission, and Laughlin are no longer acceptable, this does not mean that a larger immigration would necessarily bring the benefits that the Perlman Commission spells out in its report. Immigration of a politically feasible size will in general have no marked effect, whether detrimental or beneficial, on this country's population structure, economy, or culture. It is easier to suppose that America's foreign relations would be improved if the discriminatory restrictions against certain aliens were removed, but even this point may have been exaggerated. Immigration to the United States will not solve any problems overseas, and it will never make an important contribution to the national interest of this country, if this interest is defined in terms of *Realpolitik*.

There is really only one reason for a less restrictive immigration policy—human decency.

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LETTERS FROM READERS

Congratulations

To the Editor of Commentary:

May I congratulate Commentary upon its publication of a fine piece of intellectual autobiography? I have seldom been more moved by any account of recent experience than by Mr. Podhoretz's memoir of his years at Columbia College ("Jewish Culture and the Intellectuals," May 1955), and his feat is the more remarkable because mental experience is much the hardest variety to convey vividly. Not the least engaging characteristics of the essay are its freshness and its intensity, qualities which used automatically to be imputed to the young, but which have now evidently passed out of fashion. As an aged graduate of Columbia College (Class of 1942), I have a special interest in this more contemporary account of the best sort of college life and, contrary to the practice of the old graduate, must admit that Mr. Podhoretz's intellectual circle sounds more interesting than those of my own time. I shall look forward to Mr. Podhoretz's report of the intellectual life in the United States Army.

Robert Lekachman

Barnard College
New York City

Hebrew Camping

To the Editor of Commentary:

As a parent of four children who have spent four summers at Camp Ramah in the Poconos, I should like to present my reactions to Morris Freedman's recent description of Ramah in Connecticut ("Camp Ramah: Where Hebrew Is the Key," May 1955). While Ramah undoubtedly serves as a training center for those who later find their way into the rabbinical, teaching, and social service professions, a much larger group of children is exposed to a positive, challenging, emotional and intellectual experience unequalled in American Jewish life today.

Ramah must come as a surprise to those who know the average summer camp with its superficial, puerile cultural program, catering to the taste for comic books and television which represent the highest intellectual goals to which many of our children are taught to aspire at home. Ramah campers know Hebrew to a degree, and are able to increase their command of the language. This is at once a satisfying intellectual achievement for the child, and a firm bond tying him to the Jewish community for a lifetime.

The emphasis on prayer and ritual at Ramah is not onerous and is accepted by all the campers, since it is the norm of the community. The carry-over of observance into their daily lives after they leave camp is dependent on the home environment and the motivation of the children themselves. But even for those who ultimately do not arrive at observant Judaism, the experience is healthy.

Practically all Ramah children come from homes of high intellectual standards. The parents have wrestled with the problem of the cultural mores of the community and have decided that something more must be done than just to drift with the stream. Camp Ramah is the instrument for providing that basic love for learning which is conspicuous by its absence in an environment in which "egghead" and "intellectual" are almost terms of derision. Working and living with teachers and students whose goals are not financial, but rather intellectual, is a rewarding experience. Friendships are begun at Ramah which last throughout the years. And I must say that there is a finer spirit of camaraderie and less emotional difficulty among the campers than I have seen in any other camp.

There is no danger that the cultural American background of these children will be diluted by their love for Hebrew. It is inspiring to see and hear these children use this modern language with love and humor in their play, their daily life, their music and dramatics. They are all the richer for having learned a second language in a living context vastly superior to the sterile classroom atmosphere of modern language in the high school.

If Mr. Freedman could have approached his Ramah assignment without preconceived judgments, he would certainly have come away filled with rejoicing and hope about the sustained survival of Judaism in America. There are many Jews, including myself, who feel that Ramah is one of the finest contributions of a religious institution to the development of a richer Jewish life in our country.

(Dr.) Alexander Richman

New York City

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Is Mao Independent of Moscow?

To the Editor of Commentary:

For a generation Franz Borkenau has fought the greatest assault on truth the world has ever witnessed: the Soviet falsification of history, past and present. . . . But it is beyond all understanding that it should be Franz Borkenau ("The Peking-Moscow Axis and the Western Alliance," December 1954) who now asserts: "One sure fact can serve as the starting point for our investigation of Russo-Chinese relations today. Mao Tse-tung, alone among the present leaders of international Communism, rose to power *without Stalin's support.* In fact, had not Stalin been ignorant of and largely indifferent to what was happening in the areas of China under partisan control before 1937, Mao would in all likelihood have been purged long ago."

In 1928 Stalin was a very busy man, but not so busy that he should have been both ignorant of and indifferent to the Chinese Communist party. He managed to summon up enough intelligence and interest to expel Chen Tu-hsiu, leader of the Chinese Communist party and member of the Executive Committee of the Communist International; to remove Li Li-san, Chen's chief assistant, from all of his party positions (detaining him in Moscow for fifteen years), and personally to place Mao Tse-tung at the head of the Chinese party.

This, incidentally, occurred at the time the Sixth Congress of the Chinese Communist party was meeting in *Moscow,* at which Congress Stalin personally made the decisions. (See "China's Fate," by Bertram D. Wolfe, *American Mercury,* January 1947.)

Stalin was at this time consolidating his power in Russia. He also was assuming complete control over every national party of the Comintern. From 1928 to 1938, he was doing precisely what Mr. Borkenau now says he neglected to do with respect to the Chinese party: expelling and/or physically purging every dissident, every independent, every oppositionist in the Communist world, whether in France or on 13th Street. . . .

One need not refresh Mr. Borkenau's recollection concerning Stalin. He is among the most knowledgeable writers on the subject of that insatiable assassin. He will concede, I am sure, that when it came to purging, Stalin just never got bored. . . .

Would Stalin have overlooked an independent and oppositionist who commanded an army encamped at or near the Russian border—an army which bore Russian guns, was trained by Russian military men, spent Russian money? We must be true to the *Vozhd*'s memory: Joseph Stalin was never that generous!

A brief, accurate history of the Chinese Communist party, together with an analysis of the monopoly structure of Soviet society, would annihilate Mr. Borkenau's thesis that Mao Tse-tung is or ever was an independent force in the Stalinist world. . . .

William Herrick

Mamaroneck, N. Y.

The Latest in Weddings

To the Editor of Commentary:

Recently I was a witness to the "latest" in Jewish weddings, one which took place in the best wedding hall in the Bronx. I discovered that Solomon was wrong: there is something new under the sun.

The hall was hired from noon to five, and after two hours of feasting on hors d'oeuvres from a gigantic tiered table which looked like an overblown wedding cake, 150 relatives and friends were finally seated in a triangular-shaped room, the *chupeh* in front forming the base of the triangle. Suddenly there was a hush and from somewhere inside the wall in front a contralto voice began to sing "Because." There was quiet for a moment before the strains of the wedding march. The best man, in a tux (which he had hired for the occasion, his wife told me), opened the procession. The organ changed tunes, from Hasidic melodies to "A Pretty Girl Is Like a Melody" as each member of the procession (including the cameraman) walked to the *chupeh.*

In full voice the organ brought forth the Mendelssohn Wedding March. The bride's parents appeared. There was a single chord from the organ. Slowly a white satin curtain parted on one of the walls to reveal a showcase the size of a store window. And there stood the bride, on green crepe paper cut to resemble grass.

The light bulb flashed. She turned slowly around, her bouffant lace gown delicately brushing the green floor, and walked out of the case to meet her waiting mother and father, who slowly brought her halfway to the *chupeh,* where the groom waited. The cameraman hopped around lightly from the left side to the right, getting the best angles. The rabbi began to chant. There was a shift as people settled in their seats. The bride and groom were going to be married at last.

Ruth Dalin

New York City

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BOOKS IN REVIEW

Academic Freedom and Pluralism

ACADEMIC FREEDOM: AN ESSAY IN DEFINITION. By RUSSELL KIRK. Regnery. 210 pp. $3.75.

Reviewed by PAUL PICKREL

THE central proposition of Russell Kirk's brief but valuable book on academic freedom is that academic freedom is part of the natural law, "and if theorists deny the reality of natural law, logically they must deny the reality of academic freedom." According to the conception of natural law that Mr. Kirk espouses, society is composed of groups of people with specialized jobs to do, and each group has certain rights and responsibilities arising from and appropriate to the nature of its job. Academic freedom is the name for the rights appropriate to that group in society who devote their lives to study and teaching. Since it is the responsibility of the scholar to discover the truth, and of the teacher to instruct others in it, he must have the freedom to fulfill his responsibility. No one, however, has more than a courtesy right to participate in academic freedom who does not believe in the natural law which sanctions it. Since academic freedom is a kind of "benefit of clergy," the non-cleric can hardly expect to enjoy its protection.

Mr. Kirk's first line of defense for this position is historical. He discusses Plato's Academy as an early example of academic freedom, and quotes from the *Apology* of Socrates. But the *Apology* is not a defense of academic freedom; Socrates makes that clear at the outset. Emphatically and repeatedly he denies "that he is a teacher, and takes money." In this conjunction of ideas he puts his finger right on the issue. Whatever else academic freedom may be, it is a professional right, a right to accept payment for services while maintaining some independence of judgment about how those services are to be executed. Whether Socrates favored academic freedom is not clear from the *Apology*, but certainly he did not claim it for himself. He defended his right to free speech, which both Mr. Kirk and I think is a different thing from academic freedom.

Far more central to Mr. Kirk's argument from history is his opinion that the modern idea of academic freedom derives from the medieval university. This is of the greatest importance to his position, since the medieval university was the home of that conception of natural law which he considers the only sound philosophical basis for a defense of academic freedom. If it can be demonstrated that academic freedom comes out of the medieval university, that it has been for centuries symbiotically linked with natural law, and that the two ideas come to us in direct historical continuity from the Middle Ages, then his position must be taken very seriously.

But Mr. Kirk does not demonstrate this. In the brief compass of his book so much could scarcely be expected, but Mr. Kirk ought to be expected to do more than he has done. The line of descent he traces for academic freedom from the Middle Ages to 20th-century America seems to be mostly missing links. His description of the institutional framework of the medieval university is too sketchy to enable the reader to find out if key elements of academic freedom—tenure, for instance—were in force. He does not discuss, indeed he does not even cite, a single specific instance of how a problem involving academic freedom was handled in a medieval university.

THE more usual historical view is that the idea of academic freedom derives from Germany and from a period well after the close of the Middle Ages. Arthur O. Lovejoy puts the evidence for this view succinctly in his admirable article on academic freedom in the *Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences*, and Mr. Kirk's attempt to dispose of it by claiming that American professors did not accurately understand what academic freedom meant in Germany is not to the point. To say that American professors misunderstood the idea as it was held in Germany is not to deny that they got

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it from there, and Professor Lovejoy is too careful and too experienced an historian of ideas for his conclusions to be brushed aside as a misunderstanding. This much seems to be indisputable: it was only after American universities began to feel the influence of German universities (about 1870) that academic freedom began to be talked about in this country. Mr. Kirk has various ingenious ways of accounting for such a delay in the discussion of an idea that he regards as continuous from the Middle Ages, but certainly the view that the idea came from Germany looks more convincing by the usual standards of historiography.

Investigation of the origin of academic freedom is by no means idle. Like others interested in its defense, I would rather find its origin in the medieval universities than in the German universities of later date, because I would rather think that it led to the atmosphere of modern Oxford and Cambridge than to the atmosphere of the German universities of the 30's. But history is not whatever we wish it to be, and if the idea of academic freedom comes to us from Germany we shall be doing ourselves no service by pretending that it comes from some other source; because we ought then to recognize, for our own good, that the idea may contain within itself the possibility of abdication of moral responsibility, and be on our guard against it. My own, not very well-informed guess is that the contemporary idea of academic freedom has several sources, and that this multiplicity of sources contributes a good deal to the vigor of the idea at the same time that it complicates the problems of defining, applying, and defending it.

Mr. Kirk's second line of defense for his position is philosophical. In a sense, the philosophical defense of academic freedom based on natural law is incontrovertible. It is impossible to study anything, to teach anything, or for that matter to lead our lives without assuming that nature—whether the nature that surrounds us or the nature that is ourselves—exhibits some kind of regularity that can be called, however roughly, natural law. And academic freedom certainly derives from that assumption. There would be no reason to be free to study and teach if nothing could be studied or taught, and nothing could be studied or taught if we were random beings in a random universe.

If Mr. Kirk based his defense of academic freedom on the concept of natural law just described we would have to agree with him that to deny the reality of natural law is to deny the reality of academic freedom. But in fact what Mr. Kirk means by natural law is a particular historical formulation of moral principles which many members of the academic community can no longer embrace. While Mr. Kirk tends to be a natural-law fundamentalist, believing, like the religious fundamentalist, that the whole of revelation is contained in the ancient documents, they tend to be committed to a belief in progressive revelation, a belief that we can discover more of nature's laws than our ancestors knew. Since they hold such a belief, they attach great importance to standards of procedure, the means by which they hope to make discoveries, and, in order to be true to themselves, they must in turn measure the discoveries of the past by the same standards. To a man of Mr. Kirk's persuasion all this is likely to seem an impious concern with mere methodology to the neglect of principle, but those that I would call the best modern scholars and teachers do not make such a distinction between means and ends; they do not expect their results to receive any sanction that is not implicit in their methods.

Probably the most important difference between Mr. Kirk's position and the position that seems to me to prevail in the academic world is this: he believes (I infer) that the natural moral law is finished and complete and beyond the need of traffic with natural physical law, while a good many of us in academic life believe that there ought to be a continuous exchange between the two. To take a simple example: for many centuries left-handedness was considered morally reprehensible in our society, as it still is in much of the world. When I was a boy I was told by an old lady that any mother ought to be ashamed of herself who would let a child of hers grow up left-handed. I have no doubt that the old lady (who was no fool) would have defended her position on grounds of natural law: the right hand is simply the natural hand to use. But now most mothers would no more regard the handedness of a child as a moral problem than they would regard the size of his feet as one. The reason for this is that a considerable body of research has increased and altered our knowledge of the "natural laws" of handedness.

Mr. Kirk's book is marred by several errors of fact, and by exaggerations and inconsisten-

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cies. Many of these lapses are of little consequence to his main argument; some result from haste, and others arise from the impatience with qualification that often accompanies a vigorous and aphoristic style. One line of reasoning is in serious error. In the second chapter Mr. Kirk tries, unfairly and unpersuasively, to make progressive education and the ideas of Sidney Hook and John Dewey on the subject of democracy responsible for a particular piece of academic misbehavior. And how Mr. Kirk can think that he has disposed of progressive education in a chapter in which he never discusses the subject escapes the most attentive reader.

Yet for all that I remain finally unconvinced by Mr. Kirk's historical account of academic freedom, for all that I regard his philosophical position as too narrow and (as he would say) too doctrinaire, for all that I am annoyed by occasional inaccuracies, when I called his book valuable at the beginning of this review I meant it. I think the book makes a major contribution to the discussion of academic freedom in this country.

For one thing, it is all written out of conviction, conviction based upon wide reading, considerable first-hand investigation, and (usually) careful thought. Mr. Kirk provides a moral force where one is needed. He has formulated a conservative position on academic freedom that is a challenge not only to other conservatives but to all who are concerned for the subject. He has reminded the conservative of his role in defending academic freedom, and in fact placed upon him the chief burden for its future care. If the academic world has concentrated on breaking the tyranny of the past where the past was mistaken, at the expense of reaffirming those values in the past that have stood the test of time, Mr. Kirk provides a powerful reminder that the balance needs to be redressed.

There are many admirable passages in Mr. Kirk's book. His rebuttal of William F. Buckley's position on academic freedom is a model of analysis, charitable but incisive, terse but thorough. Though Mr. Kirk's manners fail him sometimes, as when he speaks of Professor Commager, he is nearly always an astute critic of previous writers on the subject. Some of the accounts of particular instances where academic freedom has been allegedly violated are equally good. I doubt that a better brief relation of the

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principles involved in the California controversy over the teachers' oath has been or can be written.

On the subject of the Communist teacher Mr. Kirk writes very intelligently. He recognizes that the defender of academic freedom cannot supply a simple yes or no answer to the question, "Should Communists be permitted to teach?" because the defender of academic freedom supports a whole context of values that makes him pose other and prior questions: Who is making the decision about a particular Communist teacher, the responsible officers of the educational establishment or political figures? On what grounds is the decision being made? What procedures have been employed? What rights are involved? Has the question of quality—the quality of the teacher's assent or dissent, the quality of the man himself—been regarded? And so on. On this whole subject Mr. Kirk takes a sensible position, and incidentally one considerably more latitudinarian than many writers otherwise well to his left have taken. Mr. Kirk believes, as I do, that academic freedom may be worth the price of some abuse of it.

Unlike many writers on academic freedom, Mr. Kirk is aware that we have a system of educational pluralism in this country, and it is a tribute to the accuracy of his insight, if not to the consistency of his argument, that he is an ardent champion of such pluralism. Because he knows and values the differences among our educational establishments, Mr. Kirk is saved from the common error of defenders of academic freedom, the supposition that they can talk about academic freedom in "the college" as if the history and purpose and problems of every college were exactly the same as those of every other college. At the same time, Mr. Kirk does not for a moment suppose that academic freedom is whatever the president or trustees of a particular college choose to call by that name. Academic pluralism very considerably complicates the problem of defining academic freedom, but the reality of academic freedom would be very considerably lessened if our academic pluralism were lost.

Perhaps no other single contribution Mr. Kirk makes is so valuable as his emphasis on the importance in academic freedom of academic dignity and, by implication, academic trust. Too often earnest defenders of academic freedom speak as if the academic community were full of Einsteins about to be prevented by Grand Inquisitors from announcing intellectual discoveries of the greatest magnitude. This tends to make the whole idea of academic freedom ridiculous, because anyone can glance at the academic community and see that it is not full of Einsteins. The rights of the Einsteins and the potential Einsteins must be looked to, of course, but so must the day-to-day rights of the mass of teachers, including the right to be treated as dignified and trusted members of a community of learning. Mr. Kirk recognizes that academic freedom ought not to be only a code by which the academic community can defend itself against depredators from without, but that it should also be a code by which members of the academic community can live together in seemliness.

Israel's "Strong Man"

BEN-GURION OF ISRAEL. By BARNET LITVINOFF. Praeger. 373 pp. $4.00.

Reviewed by ISRAEL KNOX

NO READER of this biography would have been surprised by Ben Gurion's return to public life as Minister of Defense in Israel's present government. Barnet Litvinoff makes clear his deep and abiding concern with the defense of Israel and his passionate attachment to Israel's army. Ben Gurion was not only Israel's first Prime Minister, he was also her first Defense Minister, holding the two portfolios right up to the hour of his resignation. Nor was he Minister of Defense in title alone; Ben Gurion, Litvinoff tells us, set aside two full days every week for the affairs of the Ministry of Defense. He is the Carnot of Israel; under his direct guidance Yadin, the Chief of Staff, shaped the army into an instrument of victory and a school for transforming immigrants into Israelis. There is no separating Ben Gurion's life from Zionism. Barnet Litvinoff's biography is therefore a contribution toward the understanding of the State of Israel as well as of its first politician and statesman, of some of the chief problems that face it, and also of the American Jewish community's connection with Israel's destiny.

It is only natural that American Jews, who make up almost half the Jews of the world and enjoy a freedom and security unmatched in the whole of Jewish history, should wish to give every help to the State of Israel. When one remembers that Israel absorbed some six

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hundred thousand refugees—the survivors of the long night of Hitlerism—the wish to help acquires the aspect of a sacred obligation. But just helping Israel is not Zionism. The failure to understand the precise program of Zionism is the basic cause of the deep confusion in which the American Jewish community finds itself today about its role and obligations vis-à-vis Israel. From its inception, Zionism set itself a twofold task: the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine; and the putting an end to the millennial exile by gathering together in the Jewish state all—or anyhow most—of the Jews from the four corners of the earth. The first half of this program has been fulfilled; the other half has not. And the trouble today is over this other half, over Zionism's—and notably Ben Gurion's—insistence on the duty of all Jews to leave the *Galut* and settle in Israel. This is so because American Jews, whether Zionist or non-Zionist, feel it in their bones—whatever their tongues may say—that America is *not* exile, is really and truly (and—one is tempted to add—blessedly) their home and shall be their children's home and their children's children's home.

Ben Gurion, who epitomizes Zionism as a movement and a way of life, was reared in Eastern Europe and knew its Jewish community intimately. Despite this, however, he has held to the conviction that Eastern European Jewry was no national entity at all—that the national history of the Jewish people was broken off after the destruction of the Second Commonwealth in 70 C.E. In recent years Ben Gurion has on occasion spoken disparagingly of the Talmud and with fervor about the Old Testament, almost with the erstwhile voice of radical reform. His motive here is not theological but political, and is in keeping with his contempt for the *Galut* and his wish to deprecate its achievements. Litvinoff assures us that to Ben Gurion Israel does not signify some small struggling state in the Middle East, but "is synonymous with the whole Jewish people," and he quotes Ben Gurion's own pronouncement on this: "The Zionist movement, the Jewish people, and the State of Israel now constitute one cohesive unity impossible to break." Ben Gurion's friendliness to American non-Zionists represents no revision of this fundamental rejection of the Diaspora, but is merely an overt display of his dissatisfaction with American Zionists who do not act on his interpretation of Zionism as *kibbutz galuyot*, the Ingathering of the Exile. Even after his visit to America, Ben Gurion could say in the Knesset: "American Zionist leaders went bankrupt on the establishment of this state. There were not five of them to get up and come to Israel. They might not have been followed by the masses, but this would have proved that Zionism was not void of meaning, at least for the leaders."

Litvinoff neatly sums up the difference between Weizmann's and Ben Gurion's Zionism: "To him [Ben Gurion], Zionism only began where the political and military struggle for independence left off. He had always thought this from the earliest days, and, consequently, the objective he set himself was fundamentally different from Chaim Weizmann's whose life-task ended in the legal award of territory by the United Nations in 1947." And it is Ben Gurion's conception of Zionism and not Weizmann's that is closer to classical Zionism and now is the official—or at least dominant—tendency. Weizmann never shook off the influence of Ahad Ha'am with his emphasis on spiritual Zionism—he was not even a supporter of the Biltmore resolution. Despite the author's admiration for Ben Gurion and his sympathy for his kind of Jewish nationalism, Weizmann emerges as a man of great moral stature, one who did not cast his humanist and Jewish-ethical principles overboard when the "exigencies" of extreme nationalism were invoked to support the terror; after Weizmann's death these same "considerations" were used to justify Kibya and the recent attack at Gaza.

In *The Hero in History*, Sidney Hook draws a distinction between the *eventful* man in history and the *event-making* man. There is no denying that in Zionism, and in the brief span of Israel's existence, Ben Gurion has been an event-making figure. As to our judgment of the events that Ben Gurion set in motion, there will naturally be a wide divergence of opinion. Although the leader of Israel's moderate Socialist-Labor party, Mapai, and an uncompromising opponent of both Communists and Revisionists, Ben Gurion is an extremist as a Zionist. His insistence on the necessity of all Jews settling in Israel, his aggressive and intransigent policy in all Israeli-Arab relations, are just two examples. His re-entry into the government was a cause of rejoicing to many Israelis and American Jews, who idolize him as

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Israel's "strong man." But it is a question whether in the long run Ben Gurion's policies will help Israel's security and status, both political and moral. Jewish liberals in America—along with other liberals—criticize Senator Knowland's policies as entailing the risk of war; they hesitate to say that Ben Gurion's policies are no guarantee of peace in the Middle East. Ben Gurion, as this biography shows us, has great and varied talents and an immeasurable patriotism—he is truly his country's "strong man." But in the judgment of history it may be that much of the blame for the *avoidable* trouble and sorrow Israel is undergoing will be laid at his door.

The New-Old Babbitt

SINCERELY, WILLIS WAYDE. By JOHN P. MARQUAND. Little, Brown. 511 pp. $3.95.

Reviewed by MORRIS FREEDMAN

MARQUAND has become established as our leading chronicler of contemporary business, whatever reservations one may have about the quality and level of his literary achievement. His current book, *Sincerely, Willis Wayde,* was serialized in a mass-circulation journal and has held first place as a best-seller for several months. Surely part of its popularity is to be found in the spectacular "inside" picture it offers. We are present in homes and offices when big industrial decisions are discussed and made; we see top businessmen at work and play; we commute cross-country by plane. Even though the documentation consists of little more than snippets of jargon and fugitive glimpses of factories, we still feel as though we are rubbing elbows with the great.

The vast panorama is background for the story of Willis Wayde, a man of no special engineering or selling skill, who rises through a series of high-class clerical assignments to be head of an industrial belting combine, by virtue entirely, so far as we can tell, of being a nice guy. Marquand sees Wayde quite differently from Dreiser and Norris, whose heroes are full-blooded robber barons, and from Howells and Lewis, whose businessmen face real moral problems. He makes a caricature of Wayde, a compendium of all the familiar notions about the Babbitry and duplicity, and also the latter-day "other-directedness," of the American businessman on his way to the top.

Wayde is a simpleton who lives by every rule of Dale Carnegie's. He remembers the hobbies and interests of important persons; he reads fifteen minutes a day from Eliot's Five Foot Shelf, "to improve his mind"; he neglects no chance to advance his career by a glad hand, even on his honeymoon. His tastes and pretensions are primitive. He is "heartless," in the manner of a Gropper cartoon, when closing down an inefficient New England plant, throwing old employees out of work. The picture is all the harsher as Wayde's careerism is almost an unconscious thing, unrelieved by a hint of self-understanding or even cynicism. Here is the description of Wayde's reactions to *Babbitt* and *The Grapes of Wrath:*

"Somehow or other these and other novels which, he thought, might have had a few cheerful thoughts in them, always left a bad taste in his mouth. Frankly, Willis preferred a plain down-to-earth writer like Dale Carnegie. It was shocking to Willis, but he had to face it, that the men who wrote these books really did not seem to like America. They did not like their country in spite of all the fine things America had done for them, such as the education it had given them and the chance to sell their books and motion-picture rights for enormous prices. They did not like America in spite of the opportunity America gave them to acquire lovely homes and have their pictures in *Life* and *Time*. These people were constantly sneering at solid institutions, snapping at the very hand that fed them. When they wrote about business, they looked upon people who earned an honest dollar by selling products, running banks or production lines as crass materialists, devoid of ideals and social conscience. Businessmen in all these novels were ruthless and very dumb. Willis often wished that he might have a talk with some of these writers. He wished that he could show them that men who ran factories and sold the products and dickered with bankers, tax examiners and labor-union organizers were not as dumb as a lot of novelists who always seemed to be at Palm Beach with some blonde."

Marquand instructs his readers how to think about Wayde, pounding the lesson home with a sledge hammer. After all, he is writing for the same ambitious American middle class to which Wayde himself belongs, and, although in the quarter-century since the crash they have been taught at college to turn their noses up

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at the old American middle-class philistinism, Marquand feels they need unmistakable pointers to keep them on the path of enlightenment. However, the scorn Marquand heaps on Wayde today is almost as philistine and slavish-minded as the Babbitry the *Saturday Evening Post* used to uphold in the 20's. It is quite certain that a real Wayde—that is, a contemporary top executive or a junior executive with aspirations—would prefer Marquand to Dale Carnegie. A real Wayde doesn't wear a Herbert Hoover stiff collar, but a Brooks Brothers button-down one. In Wayde, Marquand doesn't criticize the manners and morals of a representative figure of the American business class, but knocks down an anachronistic dummy, a straw man.

A QUEER sort of class-consciousness rules Marquand's world—one should know one's class and place. The characters who show to best advantage in the novel are the aristocratic Harcourts; even the out-and-out new rich trash, who are unselfconscious and unambiguous about their vulgarity, are not derided like Wayde. Willis is contrasted unfavorably with his father, an engineer whose ambition is only to tinker with machines. The trouble with Willis is that he rises out of his class to tinker with men, unlike Henry Harcourt who was born to this kind of tinkering, and kids himself about what he really is. (Marquand makes much of Willis's joining the Harvard Club although he actually attended only the university's graduate school of business.)

We get a hint of what Marquand might have done if he had not hung sandwich signs on his main characters (in addition to Wayde with his unctuous name, there are P. L. Nagle, *Business Buccaneer;* Henry Harcourt, *Solid and Admirable Aristocrat;* the Hodges family, *Poor but Happy Academicians*). Sylvia Hodges, whom Willis marries, is an attractive and by no means simple woman, shrewdly understanding Willis but protecting him and accommodating herself to him. She doesn't fit into Marquand's master ideology, however, and goes her own, genuine, and rather baffling way. We see in this instance, and in a few others, how Marquand might have turned his awe of the business world to reporting it in some of its morally and psychologically labyrinthine aspects.

But a Willis Wayde with complexities and ambiguities rooted in reality would have presented a serious problem to Marquand's public. It's so much pleasanter to meet someone in fiction who is, if not familiar in terms of experience, at least easy to understand as an idea. Ideas about reality are always more handy to deal with than reality itself. Like Wayde, Marquand is careful to work by the rules, to meet popular expectations all along the line. I don't know about a best-selling industrial belt, but this may be the only way to deliver a best-selling book.

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In Quest of an Asian Policy

CRUSADE IN ASIA. By CARLOS P. ROMULO. John Day. 309 pp. $4.00.

WANTED: AN ASIAN POLICY. By EDWIN O. REISCHAUER. Knopf. 276 pp. $3.75.

AN AMERICAN POLICY IN ASIA. By W. W. ROSTOW with RICHARD W. HATCH. The Technology Press of Massachusetts Institute of Technology and John Wiley and Sons. 59 pp. $1.00.

Reviewed by G. F. HUDSON

OF THESE three books on the contemporary situation in Asia, two are by scholars in the

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field of Far Eastern studies and the third is by an active politician. Carlos P. Romulo, though formerly a journalist and the author of well-known books, is primarily a man who has himself taken part in the shaping of history; as General MacArthur's aide-de-camp on Bataan, as president of the Fourth General Assembly of the United Nations, and as special envoy from the president of the Philippines to the United States, he has long been in the thick of war and diplomacy, and his tempestuous, temperamental style of writing reflects his passionate participation in the political story which he relates. Much of his book is written to vindicate his own record, particularly his adherence to the cause of Magsaysay after holding office under President Quirino; the book is nevertheless a valuable contribution to the study of the problems confronting American (and European) policies in Asia, for the postwar crisis in the Philippines had features which recur again and again in different contexts all over Asia.

For a wider and more sober consideration of these problems, with special reference to China, we may turn to the new book by Edwin O. Reischauer, Professor of Far Eastern Languages at Harvard, and to the condensed survey by W. W. Rostow and Richard W. Hatch, who previously collaborated on *The Prospects for Communist China.* These are writers of high standing in the academic field, and it is significant that in both cases an apology is deemed necessary for their descent, as it were, into the arena of public political controversy about foreign policy. The director of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, writing a preface to *An American Policy in Asia,* begins by remarking that "it is supposed to be rather bad form for a university research organization to sponsor the publication of a policy book," and Reischauer admits in his preface that, although "by profession a scholar," he writes "less as a dispassionate student of Japanese and Chinese history than as an American citizen deeply concerned about our nation's future." But that is as it should be. It is indeed vitally important that there should be no lowering of academic standards of research and historical criticism through the involvement of scholars in current political controversy, and it is well that they themselves should clearly recognize the dangers of being too much *engagé,* but it is to be regarded as a sign of improved health in the American body politic when men of scholarly attainments in specialized fields of foreign affairs enter the public political arena instead of leaving it to cranks and fanatics. If ten years ago some of the Far Eastern specialists who considered that the making of American policy (or rather of public opinion in its effect on policy) was no concern of theirs had been more willing to express their views on current affairs, the influence of the small clique of Communist and fellow-traveling writers who were then so active in propaganda would have been greatly reduced.

THE "ignorance and indifference" of Americans at all levels "from Pennsylvania Avenue down to every Main Street" in relation to Asian problems at the end of the Pacific war is the burden of Reischauer's book; in contrast to the vast liabilities and obligations which America then undertook, or had thrust upon her, he emphasizes the amazing lack of forethought and planning for the tasks ahead. The exception was Japan; there was indeed some serious planning for the occupation of Japan, and to this Reischauer attributes the relatively high degree of success which American policy achieved there. But he holds, and with justice, that "our preoccupation with the defeat of Japan so blinded us to our other Asian problems that we prepared on the whole wisely for the postwar needs of our defeated enemies, but ignored those of our victorious or liberated friends." Towards China and Korea, policy was a series of thoughtless improvisations. For the establishment of a "truly free and stable Korea," as envisaged by the Cairo Declaration, Reischauer points out that "we made no preparation whatsoever," and that "a combat general, entirely unprepared by temperament or training for his delicate political mission and lacking anything but the most superficial guidance from Washington, stepped innocently ashore into a political situation that would have tried the wisdom of a sage." The Russians in North Korea, on the other hand, had all their plans ready and men specially trained for carrying them out.

When, indeed, we look back on the contrast in those days between America's political unpreparedness and the swift, purposive Soviet exploitation of the opportunities provided by the collapse of Germany and Japan, the cause for wonder is not that so much was lost, but that the catastrophe was not even greater than it was. As it was, on the American record in China, Korea, and Indo-China, it is impossible

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"THE voices of Asia often seem alien and distant. Yet an American, listening carefully as 29 Asian and African nations met at Bandung, couldn't help but hear echoes from his own country's past—reminders of the days when America was newly free, and jealous of its freedom, sensitive of its dignity, anxious to be left alone to make its own way.

"Yet it was something of a surprise—welcome and encouraging—that nation after nation got up at Bandung to shout for freedom. More, they spoke in support of the United States; Pakistan's Ali, the Philippines' Romulo, Iraq's al-Jamali, Sir John Kotelawala of Ceylon, and others exposed the promises of Communists and the woolly thinking of neutralists.

"But these Asians are not committed, willy-nilly, to the West and to the U. S. They are Asians, first and always. And as Asians, they often sympathize with the problems of China and China's Communists. Peking's able premier, Chou En-lai, made a strong impression at Bandung with his soothing talk of peace. Clearly the Communists can still increase their influence in Asia—and are bound to try by all means at their disposal.

"The U. S. can do the same. We can, that is, provided our approach to Asians and their problems is flexible, imaginative, and infinitely patient. Above all, Asian nations are concerned with independence and economic progress. We can help them help themselves toward their goals. But we must lean over backwards to respect their independence. This is essential in our efforts to avoid war; and if war should come, it is equally essential that they stand on the side of freedom.

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to disagree with Reischauer's summing up that "in all these areas we see a powerful but politically naive and off-guard America exposing itself to attack and then struggling desperately for sound footing as it reels from one blow to the next."

The difference today is that since the Korean war, Far Eastern policy has become a matter of national attention, and however wide the diversity of opinions about what ought to be done, nobody can speak any longer of public indifference towards Asian problems. The decisions on policy which have recently been taken in the United States are products of what may be regarded as a national deliberation; whether they are wise or unwise, they are at any rate results of conscious choice, not of haphazard floundering. The controversy which inevitably at the outset took the form of a post-mortem and an attempt to fix responsibility for the great failures of 1945-50 has now moved into a more constructive phase, of which the new books by Reischauer and Rostow are typical.

Both writers share a wide measure of agreement in their policy recommendations, though with considerable difference of emphasis. Reischauer is the more aware of Asia's past and of the psychological difficulties in the approach to the Asian mind, Rostow the more keenly analytical in his estimate of the strength and weakness of the Communist position in Asia and of the pros and cons of alternative courses of policy in the present international situation. Both assume that the United States cannot and will not abandon Formosa to the Chinese Communists as part of a Far Eastern settlement, but both are in favor of United Nations membership for the Peking government at an early date.

Reischauer's reasons, however, for this advocacy of admission to the United Nations are less cogent than Rostow's. He seems to set excessive hopes on the possibility of China and Russia drawing apart if not held together by China's present isolation, whereas Rostow lays more emphasis on the split in the free world caused by divergent policies towards China and argues that "the presence of Communist China's representatives in the United Nations might assist in unifying the free world coalition, since that action would permit its members to take the measure of Peking's policies and purposes without the confusion caused by the membership conflict." At the same time Rostow clearly states his view that "under present conditions the voting of United Nations membership for Peking would be an act of appeasement by the free world" and that it should not be conceded until "the military situation is stabilized." This is a wise qualification, but the same cannot be said for his suggestion that, if Communist China were to be admitted, "the permanent seat on the security council now held by Nationalist China should pass to an authentically independent Asian power, perhaps to India." Peking would certainly refuse to enter the United Nations on these terms and, as Communist China is obviously a stronger power than India, it would have a valid claim to the permanent seat—an institution which was meant to differentiate great powers as such without regard to their merits.

WHILE Reischauer is primarily interested in the conflict of ideas and the political counterwork against Communism in Asia, Rostow lays the greatest stress on "an enlarged and sustained investment program in free Asia." He recognizes that the problem of aid to underdeveloped countries is "not merely to mobilize capital but also to develop the ability to absorb

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capital," and he has moved beyond the illusions of the time when it was thought sufficient merely to hand out large sums of money to friendly Asian governments in order to secure them against Communism and win the gratitude of their peoples. He believes, however, that a well-conceived program of investment and technical aid can enable the West to "outrace" Communism economically in Asia and demonstrate—in a manner which will ultimately have its effect not only in the non-Communist countries but also in China itself—the falsity of its claim to be a better road to industrialization and high living standards. Here is indeed the root of the matter, and if expenditure in the past seems to have had disappointingly meager results, experience should by now have indicated what are the pitfalls to be avoided.

In this connection Romulo's account of what happened in the Philippines is very instructive. He shows how the Communist-led Huk guerrillas overran the country up to the very suburbs of Manila even while American money was being poured into the country, because these funds went to swell the private fortunes of hangers-on of the ruling clique and brought no improvement in the condition of the masses. It was only when a real popular leader appeared in the person of Magsaysay that the Huks were crushed. Magsaysays cannot be produced to order, but American diplomacy, if carried on by men of good judgment, experience, and tact, can do much to insure that funds supplied operate to increase that general benefit for which they are intended. The first thing in Asia is to organize a military defense against Communism at the most vulnerable points; the second is to win back the anti-imperialist intelligentsia which Communism has partly captured; and the third—perhaps the most difficult task of all—is to convince the peasant in his village that the Western world wishes him well.

American Liberalism

THE LIBERAL TRADITION IN AMERICA: AN INTERPRETATION OF AMERICAN POLITICAL THOUGHT SINCE THE REVOLUTION. By LOUIS HARTZ. Harcourt, Brace. 329 pp. $4.75.

Reviewed by DANIEL J. BOORSTIN

MR. HARTZ attempts to explain the American liberal tradition by relating it to European history. This relation, he tells us, lies primarily in the absence of feudalism in America, and secondarily in the crucial influence of certain European ideas (or rather books), notably those of John Locke. Parts of this volume have already appeared as brief essays in learned journals, and in that form seemed brilliant. But this is not the work we had hoped for from Mr. Hartz. His occasional passages of profound exegesis do not add up to a fresh and coherent interpretation of American liberalism. He does, however, unwittingly reveal a good deal about the present state of the liberal tradition in America.

ALTHOUGH Mr. Hartz purports to liberate our thinking about ourselves, he ends by confining his thinking about America in a prison of European comparisons. He seems unable to describe what is characteristically American except by enumerating the several peculiarly European phenomena which have happened to be absent from American history. The basic fact, which dominates the book, is "the absence of feudalism"; but also "we have never had a real [i.e. European] conservative tradition"; "there were three parts to the problem American Whiggery faced: the absence of an aristocracy to fight, the absence of an aristocracy to ally with, and the absence of a mob to denounce"; "The Civil War . . . if it seems on the surface like a French Revolution in reverse, is really nothing of the kind." And so it goes. This is all like describing a horse by saying that it is an animal that lacks the trunk of the elephant, has not the neck of the giraffe, and also cannot jump like a kangaroo. But how much clearer and more helpful simply to say what a horse looks like and how it behaves!

This preoccupation with European comparison carries with it, of course, a readiness to accept European "liberal" clichés about American culture. We are "a kind of national embodiment of the concept of the bourgeoisie"; we suffer from a "conformitarian ethos"; we have attached "to the Horatio Alger cosmos the grand and glorious label of Americanism." The most prominent feature of recent American life is the "red scare mentality." Mr. Hartz's obviously lively mind expresses itself not in new insights but in the translation of cliché into paradox. "The outstanding thing about socialism in America," he tells us, "was not its presence but its absence."

The obscurity of Mr. Hartz's style comes

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not only from his obsession with the superficially paradoxical but from his prodigious bookishness. These pages bristle with allusions; and the reader is made to feel that if he is not already as learned as the author, he cannot hope to understand what the author has to say.

UNFORTUNATELY, this is not merely a stylistic mannerism, nor is it the inevitable disproportion between the scholar and the amateur. It betrays perhaps the deepest flaw in the book—as also in contemporary liberalism—namely, a weakness for mistaking books for life. "Condorcet might make sense out of Burke's traditionalism, for it was the reverse of his own activism, but what could he say about Otis, who combined both concepts in a synthesis that neither had seen?" "Whatever might be said about Jackson, he is not a Benjamin Disraeli; and whatever might be said about Leggett, he is something short of a Friedrich Lasalle." Calhoun is described as one who tried "to live at the same time in the dark world of Sir Walter Scott and the brightly lit world of John Locke." Mr. Hartz writes as if the American past had been inhabited not by people but by books. His "American liberalism" is a baroque tapestry of books, and books about books, but hardly finds place for the facts of life. Such institutions as equality, representative government, federalism, constitutionalism, civil liberties, free enterprise, and free public education are either referred to not at all, or described in the mirror of hostile critics. For Mr. Hartz no event or institution seems quite so important as a book; the notion that even books might finally have to be justified in the texture of life or in the shape of institutions is nowhere seriously suggested.

IT IS, of course, dangerous these days to accuse anyone of bookishness, since that makes the critic an "anti-intellectual." But this book is a monument of hyper-intellectualism. It overlooks the everyday operation of our institutions for the narrower satisfaction of discussing the neatly arranged contents of books. It betrays the mind which has become more interested in playing with itself than with its subject. In this Mr. Hartz's work is perhaps an accurate expression of the current "liberal" tradition, which seems unable to avert its gaze from the library long enough to discover the characteristic processes and virtues of American life; and which is more concerned to develop a language in which a priesthood can preach to the converted than with finding avenues to the great community.

BOOK REVIEWERS IN THIS ISSUE

PAUL PICKREL, managing editor of the *Yale Review*, reviewed Lionel Trilling's *The Opposing Self* in our April issue.

ISRAEL KNOX is associate professor of philosophy at New York University. He contributed "Reform Judaism Re-appraises Its Way of Life" in December 1954.

MORRIS FREEDMAN is an associate editor of COMMENTARY. His "Camp Ramah: Where Hebrew Is the Key" appeared in our May issue.

G. F. HUDSON is a noted authority on Far Eastern affairs. His "Balance Sheet on Bandung" appeared last month.

DANIEL J. BOORSTIN teaches history at the University of Chicago and is author of *The Genius of American Politics*.

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